

## Chapter 19

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# Recreation, Sport and the Arts

*Hong Kong people are hard working by nature but they also know how to relax and enjoy themselves through many different sports, cultural and other recreational activities. A growing array of programmes and facilities enables people of all ages and abilities to participate and improve their quality of life.*

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

The Hong Kong Sports Institute Limited helps develop sports in Hong Kong with special emphasis on training athletes for high performance sports, while 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 Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), an executive arm of the Home Affairs Bureau, provides the community with services to preserve its cultural heritage, enhance its physical environment, and fosters co-operative interaction between sports, cultural and community organisations.

During the year, the LCSD organised several large-scale exhibitions, some of which won acclaim from around the world. It also organised cultural performances, ranging from music and dance to opera, as well as sporting events.

At the community level, the LCSD co-ordinates the provision of high 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, and 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 Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games were the first to be held on Chinese soil. Hong Kong had the honour to co-host the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government collaborated with the Beijing Organising Committee for the Games in providing full support in the staging of the equestrian events. The LCSD also staged a series of Olympic related events including the Beijing 2008 Olympic Torch Relay in Hong Kong, Olympic Live Sites plus free admission to LCSD leisure facilities.

### **The Environment**

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.

### **The Arts**

It is the Government's policy to provide an environment conducive to freedom of expression and artistic creation that encourages free participation in all aspects of cultural life. The four major elements of this policy are 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 on the performing arts, museums, libraries and Cantonese opera were established in 2004 to advise the Secretary for Home Affairs on policies and strategies for the development of arts and culture. 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. On the recommendation of the committee, the LCSD also soft-launched a venue partnership scheme for the department's venues.

The Committee on Museums and the Committee on Libraries also submitted their recommendation reports in May 2007 and the Government accepted their recommendations in principle. As recommended by the Committee on Libraries, a Public Libraries Advisory Committee was set up in May 2008 to advise the Government on the overall development strategy for libraries.

The Cantonese Opera Advisory Committee (COAC) advises the Secretary for Home Affairs on the promotion, preservation, study and development of Cantonese opera. To tie in with the work of the COAC, the Cantonese Opera Development Fund was established in 2005. Up to the end of 2008, the fund has supported some 210 Cantonese opera projects with a funding of \$17 million.

### **Hong Kong Arts Development Council**

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

Arts funding is one of the HKADC's main tasks. Apart from proactive projects to meet the diversified needs of the arts community, different types of grant schemes including one-year, multi-project, devolved and project grants are available to support the broad development of local artists and arts organisations, especially emerging artists and small-to-medium sized arts groups. A grant for cultural exchange between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta was introduced in June 2008.

The Hong Kong Arts Development Awards presentation ceremony 2007 was held in February 2008, marking the vital contributions made by local artists to the advancement of the arts and aimed at encouraging community support, sponsorship and participation in arts activities.

To make the arts more accessible to all, the HKADC organised and conducted a range of arts promotion events and activities. It collaborated with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council for the eighth consecutive year to organise the Hong Kong Book Fair's Critics Recommendations and Literary Seminar. The HKADC again joined the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in mounting the Hong Kong Literary Festival.

Other events, including an 'A-Glow-Glow' Macro Interactive Media Arts Exhibition and a 'Mobile Art Gallery', were designed to bring the fun of the arts to the public. To prepare for a diversity of arts activities in schools and the community, an Arts Ambassadors-in-school Scheme and a Community Arts Activities Enhancement Scheme were launched. These opened for applications in the second half of the year.

To strengthen co-operation between the local arts community and their Mainland and overseas counterparts, the HKADC took part in organising regional and international events. These included the arts and cultural activities of the Hong Kong Day at the fourth China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair in May, the third Guangzhou Triennial, and the 11th Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition. Participation in the latter was organised by the HKADC and the Hong Kong Institute of Architects.

### **Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts**

Established in 1984 with an autonomous governing council, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts offers professional education, training and research facilities in the entertainment arts, including theatre, film and television.

During the year, the academy launched the Master of Fine Arts (Theatre and Entertainment Arts). This followed the establishment of the Master of Fine Arts (Dance) and Master of Music programmes during the preceding two years. These four postgraduate programmes attracted a total of 73 students. The academy also successfully completed a Programme Area Accreditation exercise giving the institution self-accreditation status.

As part of the academy's internationalisation strategy, it played host to the Symposium on Cultural Leadership in October 2008. This aims to provide training to local arts administrators to strengthen Hong Kong's cultural environment in anticipation of the Western Kowloon Cultural District development.

In 2008, the academy's Extension and Continuing Education for Life (EXCEL) programme enrolled 6 949 participants in 352 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.

The centre serves as a hub, provided with all the essentials and backing for the development of the arts and creativity. The 19-storey building houses galleries, theatres, cinema, studios, classrooms and offices all under one roof. It 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 both in the Arts Centre Building and other locations. These included the '14th Hong Kong Independent Short Film and Video Awards', which received wide support from young talent, the 'Hooves on the Moves Exhibition' echoing the 2008 Olympic Equestrian Events in Hong Kong, the 'Hong Kong Arts Centre 30th Anniversary

Exhibition', the 'Hong Kong Art School Graduation Exhibition 2008' exhibiting works of the graduates of the school's award bearing programmes, 'Yayoi Kusama — I Adore Myself', a documentary on the prominent artist at work from 2006-2007 and 'Art of Commercials 2008' presenting masterpiece commercials from all over the world.

The Arts Centre also joined Casterman, one of the biggest European comics publishers, in publishing the French version 'L'Enfer de Jade', created by Hong Kong comics artist, Lai Tat Tat Wing.

### **The Fringe Club**

The Fringe Club is housed in what used to be a cold storage warehouse built in 1890, now designated a historical building. After the Fringe Club moved in in 1983, the building underwent major renovation to make it suitable 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 and publicity support, as well as opportunities to go on overseas tours. During the past two decades, more than 500 arts groups from Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America have used the premises for cultural exchanges.

The Fringe Club presented the annual City Festival, an urban culture festival covering an array of interests and activities, including performing and visual arts, cultural exchange projects, heritage and living history programmes, and workshops on urban studies and design. In 2008, one of the highlight programmes was *Creative China*, which showcased new works by young theatre groups from Shandong, Guangxi, Guangdong, Beijing and Shanghai, and an exhibition of 'New Photography in China' by 27 photographers. During the year, the Fringe Club produced *Ho Chi Minh in Hong Kong*, a historical legal drama which was staged at the Central Police Station and the Fringe Club. It also assisted visits by Hong Kong and Mainland artists to Bangkok Patravadi Theatre and the Seoul Fringe Festival.

### **The Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre**

In 2005, the Hong Kong Baptist University set 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, to be called the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre. In 2007, the Government entrusted the university with the task of carrying out conversion works and the centre was officially opened by the Chief Executive on September 26, 2008.

The centre is a multi-disciplinary artists' village and a self-financed, activity-based organisation aimed at promoting creative arts in the community. It is a registered charity. Apart from providing 124 studio units to be rented to individual artists or arts groups, it also provides accommodation for a small number of institutional arts tenants. The centre runs a black box theatre and two galleries for public hire.

## Performing Arts Groups

### *Chung Ying Theatre*

Established in 1979, the Chung Ying Theatre Company is a non-profit-making professional theatre company. It is dedicated to creating high quality theatrical productions and to promoting the theatrical arts, exploring cultural exchanges and enriching cultural life. In August, the company became a venue partner of Kwai Tsing Theatre.

In 2008, the company staged an international bestseller, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, an experimental project *10th Borrett Road Laboratory*, a family entertainment *The Insect Play*, a local farce *The Last Bet of My Dead Aunt*, and an adaptation of a local story, *Freshly Frozen School*. It also co-presented *The Legend of Mulan* with the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra and *Legends* with the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. The *Legends* was a graduation project directed by a student of the Academy for Performing Arts.

The company's outreach and professional education programmes strive 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 creative dance talent in the context of modern China. In 2008, the company produced four original productions and hosted the Jumping Frames Dance Video Festival 2008. It was invited to perform in the closing ceremony of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Torch Relay in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Welcome Reception of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Equestrian Events, and in Guangzhou, Beijing, New York, Rome and Rovereto. The CCDC Dance Centre also offers a variety of dance courses to the public and develops new audiences through its outreach programmes.

### *Hong Kong Ballet*

In 2008, the Hong Kong Ballet entered a new era with a number of well-received productions. Five new productions were staged including an educational production, *Evolution of Ballet*, two mixed-bill productions, *All Tchaikovsky* and *Tricolor*, a new choreography showcase *Watch this Space* and Ronald Hynd's comedy classic *Coppélia*.

Tan Yuan Yuan, one of the top ballerinas to emerge from China, joined the company as Guest Principal Dancer in May and marked her first-ever appearance with the company in *Tricolor*. She also starred in *Giselle* in the first three

performances of the company's 10-day tour of Shanghai, Hangzhou and Ningbo in October.

The company is a venue partner of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and has launched a series of audience-building plans. The company's Education and Outreach Department continues to make the art of ballet accessible to the general public through various activities, reaching over 20 000 people during the year.

### *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 promoting the development of Chinese music. One prominent characteristic of the orchestra's art is its root in classical Chinese music and fusion with western music.

During 2008, apart from 130 performances, the orchestra organised the Hong Kong International Festival of Chinese Orchestras and the Hong Kong Drum Festival. It was invited to perform at the Hong Kong Day of the China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair and the inaugural season of the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing. The orchestra was also invited to perform at four major concert halls in Britain and on the bank of the Yellow River at Guide County, Qinghai, where it received excellent reviews.

### *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.

During 2008, the company staged 35 performances, attracting a combined audience of over 110 000. The productions included *Qingming Riverside*, *Desperately Seeking Miss Blossom*, *Mulan*, *We Have a Dream* and *Snow Fox*. The company also gave six performances in Beijing, Dongguan and Zhongshan, and was invited to take part in the pre-opening performance of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. In addition, the company also became a venue partner of Tsuen Wan Town Hall.

### *Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra*

The 90 full-time musicians of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, under the direction of Edo de Waart, built on the success of the four 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 in the Xinghai Concert Hall in Guangzhou and the Macao Cultural Centre. It collaborated with a number of major international artists including violinist Midori, cellist Yo-Yo Ma and soprano Sumi Jo. In September, the orchestra announced that Chinese pianist Yundi Li would become the Orchestra's Artist-in-residence. Throughout the year, the orchestra collaborated with the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Opera Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Arts Festival. It also hosted the Young Musician of the Year 2008 Final.

### Hong Kong Repertory Theatre

The Hong Kong Repertory Theatre staged 10 productions in 2008. Highlight programmes of the year included a revival of *De Ling and Empress Dowager Ci Xi*, followed by four performances at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in support of the *Meet in Beijing 2008 Cultural Events — Arts Festival of Hong Kong and Macao*. Other overseas tours included participation in the 31st session of Theatre of the Nations at Nanjing and a cultural exchange tour to Singapore with Paul Poon's *Central Reconstructed*, jointly performed with artistes of Theatre Practice.

Local programmes included Raymond To's *Love You Forever*, and the original musical *Family Protection Unit*, a re-run of Yasmina Reza's *ART*, Stan Lai's *xiang sheng* drama *Total Woman*, Anthony Chan's original musical *Field of Dreams* and a local adaptation of Ken Ludwig's Broadway comedy *Moon Over Buffalo*.

The company continued its commitment to drama education and audience building by organising various drama workshops and seminars.

### Hong Kong Sinfonietta

Established in 1990, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta is one of Hong Kong's leading professional orchestras. Under the music directorship of Yip Wing-sie, since 2002 the orchestra has been gaining recognition with versatile and innovative programmes, ranging from classical concerts to cutting-edge fusion with other creative art forms. In 2008, the orchestra gave over 70 performances, including concerts with Plácido Domingo, Augustin Dumay, Peter Donohoe and Chien Wen-pin, as well as collaborations with the Royal Ballet, Opera Hong Kong and Hong Kong Ballet.

### 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.

The company's major productions in 2008 included premières of *My Life as a TV* and *Of Wills and Willpower*, a re-run of *Man of la Tiger* and *L'Empereur du Chant*, children's theatre productions of *The Secret Garden of Red Hoodlet*, *Villain Village* and *Chubby Chubby Sheep Sheep. The Game* — a signature production of the company — was premiered in Shanghai at the invitation of the Shanghai Theatre Academy.

Under its venue-artist partnership programme - PIP Let's Play, the company organised various admission-free art educational events promoting art appreciation.

The company became PIP Cultural Industries with effect from April 1, 2008, the first cultural enterprise in Hong Kong to originate from a performing arts company. Building upon its core value of PIP (Pleasure • Imagination • Play), it is a pioneer in exploring the potential of Hong Kong's nascent cultural industries.



### *Zuni Icosahedron*

Zuni Icosahedron is a multimedia experimental theatre group founded in 1982 since when it has made creative attempts in the various aspects of theatre and participated in arts education, arts criticism, arts policy research and international cultural exchange.

In 2008, Zuni presented productions including a newly-commissioned Kunqu opera, *Tang Xianzu's Dream on Dreams*, and the plays *God Came to China* (co-commissioned by 2008 New Vision Arts Festival), *East Wing West Wing 7: The Hong Kong Civil Servant Death Note*, and *Tears of Barren Hill* (co-commissioned by the Hong Kong Arts Festival 2008). The latter production won an award in the international Music Theatre NOW 2008 competition.

### **Visual Arts Groups**

#### *1a space*

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

Highlights of 1a space's programmes in 2008 included the collaborative art event *Cattle Depot in March: Arts and Community Online* and participation in a number of exhibitions.

#### *Artist Commune*

Artist Commune was established as a non-profit-making arts group in July 1997 and has committed itself mainly to building up dialogue between the arts and the community. It first set up studio in the Cheung Fat Industrial Building in Shek Tong Tsui, from where it moved to Oil Street Artist Village in North Point, and then to 'Slaughter House' in Cheung Sha Wan. It finally settled down in 'Cattle Depot Artist Village' in To Kwa Wan in 2001.

In 2008, Artist Commune organised 13 visual arts programmes, some of which were responses to current social issues such as city development and the Sichuan earthquake

#### *Asia Art Archive*

Founded in 2000, the Asia Art Archive (AAA), a Hong Kong-registered charity, is dedicated to documenting the recent history of visual arts in the region and making it accessible to the public.

More than 23 000 items are available to the public on the AAA's website and in its archives. In addition, it organises workshops, symposia, talks and publications promoting a free flow of ideas.

With researchers based 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 2008, AAA organised over 20 programmes for the public, including a major museum conference entitled 'Shifting Sites: Cultural Desire and the Museum', and a community project 'What is your dream museum?', which reached more than 10 000 participants throughout the community.

### *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 organised various activities including a large-scale integrated visual arts education programme, 'Hong Kong Visual Arts Education Festival 07/08', 'The Artist Teacher Promotion Scheme' which encouraged teachers to engage in artistic creation, 'The Art of Light: Campus Promotion Scheme' which blended environmental protection and the arts, and 'The Integrated Arts Education Serial Workshops' which explored the new direction of visual arts education. The society also published *Hong Kong Art Education*, Hong Kong's only professional arts education journal.

### *Lumervisum*

Lumervisum was founded by five veteran photographers and photography educators in May 2007 and was registered as a non-profit-making company. Established as a centre of education, exchange, promotion, resources and sharing in photography, Lumervisum aims to promote photography as an effective medium for communication and expression by enhancing the individual's perception and skills in handling photographic images.

In 2008, Lumervisum held a series of exhibitions, activities and workshops including solo photo exhibitions by Alfred Ko and Michael Wolf; 'Greyish-blue in Beijing', a pinhole photo exhibition by Sham Ka-ho, Bobbin and a public photo exhibition, 'Sport = Happy', and photography workshops under the titles 'Dong Jia — II' and 'Kwun Tong Urban Renewal'.

### *Para/Site Art Space*

In 2008, Para/Site Art Space, a visual arts organisation supported by the HKADC, continued its mission to promote contemporary art in Hong Kong. In addition to thematic exhibitions, it organised a series of activities including 'What are we doing where?', part of the programme of the Hong Kong — Shenzhen Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture solo exhibitions that showcased the work of internationally renowned artists such as Dennis Oppenheim and Franz Ackerman. Equally active overseas, Para/Site curated a show forming part of the 'Pearl River City' touring exhibition series at Kubus, Munich, as well as an exhibition about Asian art spaces in the Open Space of the Cologne Art Fair.

### **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. 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 to undertake less formal studies, projects or creative work outside Hong Kong.

During the year, the fund awarded six scholarships worth about \$3.36 million.

## **Music Office**

The Music Office promotes knowledge and appreciation of music in the community, especially among young people, through the provision of instrumental and ensemble training and the organisation of various music activities with a view to building a new generation of concert audiences. It also organises international music exchange programmes to foster sharing of music among local young musicians and their counterparts across the world. In 2008, it provided music training to a total of 8 050 trainees under its three training programmes and its music promotional activities attracted 160 000 participants.

## **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 performance venues: the Concert Hall, with a seating capacity of 2 019, the Grand Theatre, seating 1 734, and the Studio Theatre which seats 303 to 496 people. In 2008, more than 800 100 people attended 832 performances at these venues.

### *Hong Kong City Hall*

Hong Kong City Hall, which was built in Hong Kong in 1962, is a major multi-purpose complex comprising a 1 434-seat concert hall, a 463-seat theatre, a 111-seat recital hall, an exhibition hall and an exhibition gallery. A total of 734 events were held there during the year, attracting over 423 700 people.

### *Regional and District Civic Centres*

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

### *Venue Partnership Scheme*

As an arts development initiative recommended for implementation in a study entitled *Committee on Performing Arts Recommendation Report (I)* published in 2006, the Venue Partnership Scheme aims to foster a partnership between venues and performing arts groups and organisations with the prime objectives of building

the image and character of individual venues and their partners, enlarging the audience base, optimising use of space and facilities of the venues, developing marketing strategies and soliciting sponsorship, encouraging community involvement in the development of the arts in Hong Kong and contributing to the development of the performing arts scene.

Under a three-year pilot scheme, the venue partners are able to make advance programme plans through priority bookings and funding support, thus enhancing their programme preparation. Some venue partners commenced their activities under the scheme in the second quarter of 2008 and it will be fully launched in 2009-10 with all 18 venue partners engaged in performances and activities in 10 performance venues managed by the LCSD.

### *Indoor Stadia*

Opened in 1983 and 1980 respectively, the 12 500-seat Hong Kong Coliseum and 3 600-seat Queen Elizabeth Stadium are two of the largest multi-purpose indoor stadia in Hong Kong. Their flexible stage and seating structure, coupled with world class facilities, are suited for international and local activities, ranging from cultural and entertainment to sporting and celebratory events. A total of 29 and 61 events were staged in the Coliseum and the Stadium, attracting over 857 000 and 184 000 people respectively.

In preparation for the 2009 East Asian Games, major improvement works were arranged in 2008 to provide an entirely new look for these two venues.

### *West Kowloon Cultural District*

The West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) is a major initiative taken by the Government to implement its policy on enhancing arts and culture in Hong Kong. The aim is to develop an integrated arts and cultural district with world-class arts and cultural facilities, distinguished talents, iconic architectures and quality programmes with a must-visit appeal to local people and tourists.

The Government has accepted the recommendations of the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities (CACF) for developing the WKCD. These include 15 different size venues for a comprehensive variety of performing arts. These will be developed in two phases: a cultural institution with museum functions (temporarily known as M+) focusing on 20th to 21st century visual culture, and an exhibition centre focusing on arts and culture and the creative industries, with not less than three hectares of piazza areas.

The findings of the three-month Public Engagement (PE) exercise, conducted from mid-September to mid-December 2007, indicated strong public support for the recommendations of the CACF.

The draft legislation on the establishment of an independent statutory body, the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA), to undertake the WKCD project was introduced into the Legislative Council in February 2008. This was enacted in July 2008 and a one-off up-front endowment of \$21.60 billion to cover the capital costs of the WKCD project was also approved by the Legislative Council.

Appointments of members to the Board of the WKCD were announced in October 2008. Six Committees — the Development Committee, the Performing Arts Committee, the Museum Committee, the Remuneration Committee, the Investment Committee and the Audit Committee — have since dealt with different areas of work to kickstart the implementation of the WKCD project.

### *URBTIX*

URBTIX (Urban Ticketing System) commenced operation in 1984 and has become the most widely-used computerised ticketing system in Hong Kong. URBTIX offers patrons a range of convenient and reliable ticketing services through its network of 35 outlets as well as its internet and telephone booking services. In 2008, over \$518 million was paid through URBTIX for some 3.6 million tickets for over 7 400 performances.

## **Cultural Presentations**

### *LCSD Cultural Presentations*

The LCSD provides quality cultural programmes on a year-round basis. In 2008, a total of 1 088 performances were presented, featuring local and visiting artists in a variety of cultural programmes appealing to audiences of all ages. More than 511 500 people attended these performances.

The LCSD is committed to organising top quality events and among many world-renowned artists performed in Hong Kong during the year, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic in concerts under the baton of Esa-Pekka Salonen with piano soloist Yefim Bronfman that were relayed to audiences of as many as 7 000 people at the outdoor Piazza of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Other notable visiting arts groups included the United Kingdom's Royal Ballet, the Paul Taylor Dance Company and the Peking Opera Theatre of Shanghai.

Major music performances included Verdi's *Don Carlos*, co-presented by the LCSD and Opera Hong Kong and featuring both local and visiting artists, recitals by mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter, pianist Leif Ove Andsnes, the Borodin Quartet, and Fabio Biondi with Europa Galante, and jazz concerts by the Sadao Watanabe Group and the McCoy Tyner Quartet.

The LCSD continued to work closely with local cultural organisations. It supported the Chopin Society of Hong Kong in its presentation of the second 'Hong Kong International Piano Competition' featuring contestants from all over the world and adjudicated by a 10-member jury panel headed by Vladimir Ashkenazy. The department also assisted the Hong Kong Composers' Guild Limited by playing host to *Musicarama* which included a Chinese Symphonic Concert of representative works of the last century, and a series of concerts with themes on Asian modern music, handbells and choral music.

Local dance and theatre companies are always in the forefront of Hong Kong's performing arts scene and the vitality and creativity of local artists were seen in productions by such companies as DanceArt, Unlock Dancing Plaza, 7A Class Drama Group, Drama Gallery and TNT Theatre. Thematic series including 'Hong Kong

Stories', 'Brecht Festival' and 'Playwright Scheme III 2008' were promoted to support local artists, while a special promotional campaign for local small-to-medium sized theatre groups was also launched.

The department is keen to preserve and develop the vernacular art of Cantonese opera. A 'Young Cantonese Opera Artists Series' featuring performances by local Cantonese opera groups, including the Hong Kong Young Talent Opera Troupe and Sunny Cantonese Opera Troupe, was presented not only to preserve this particular delicate art but also to inject new vitality. The large-scale free 'Cantonese Opera Day' was organised to promote this traditional art to the public.

During the year trial runs of cultural programmes were arranged in several non-LCSD venues including the HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity, Cattle Depot Artist Village, Nan Lian Garden, universities and Tin Ching Community Hall. These typify the department's concerted efforts to strengthen ties with local artists and support their growth and development in the community.

The LCSD also assists major local film events, including the annual Hong Kong Film Awards Presentation Ceremony, by providing the organisers with free venues and ticketing services.

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

### *Entertainment Programmes*

During the year, 617 carnivals and free entertainment programmes were organised by the LCSD. More than 900 000 people attended these events.

Outdoor extravaganzas included the Mid-Autumn Lantern Carnivals, featuring over 50 artists from Guizhou, Hebei and Beijing in spectacular dance and acrobatic performances, the New Year's Eve Countdown Carnival, and the Lunar New Year Lantern Carnivals, as well as the Outdoor Concert of the Hong Kong International Jazz Festival 2008 and a Youth Band Marathon. To enhance cultural exchange between the local and Asian communities in Hong Kong, the LCSD continued to organise events such as a Concert in the Park featuring Filipino artists and Asian ethnic cultural performances. The former was presented in collaboration with the Consulate-General of the Philippines, while the latter, which featured Indian and Indonesian cultural performances were jointly presented with the Consulates-General of India and the Republic of Indonesia.

### *Arts Education and Audience-building Projects*

During the year, 1 225 arts education and audience-building activities were organised by the LCSD to help local citizens, particularly school students, better appreciate the performing arts. They included organised visits to cultural venues and the taking of outreach arts activities to schools and the community. A new initiative entitled 'Experience the Arts — Pilot Scheme for Senior Secondary Students' was launched to tie in with the implementation of the Aesthetic Development under the

New Senior Secondary Curriculum in the 2009-10 school year, offering a series of in-depth performing arts programmes for senior secondary school students.

## Major Cultural Events

### *Hong Kong Arts Festival*

Held annually in February and March, the Hong Kong Arts Festival is one of the longest-established international festivals in Asia. The 2008 festival attracted over 127 600 people to 122 performances with an overall attendance rate of 98 per cent, a 36-year record high.

Highlights of the festival included the equestrian theatre Zingaro production jointly presented with the Hong Kong Jockey Club in support of the Olympic Equestrian Events co-hosted by Hong Kong as part of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the Teatro Regio di Parma's production of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Beijing Opera's *The Master of Chou: Xiao Changhua*, the New York Philharmonic Orchestra with Lorin Maazel, Vladimir Jurowski and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, András Schiff, Ornette Coleman, Samuel Beckett's play *Fragments* directed by Peter Brook, Ibsen's *The Master Builder* directed by Lin Zhaohua, the American Repertory Theatre's *Orpheus X*, Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* directed by Tang Shu-wing, Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch's *Vollmond* and Stuttgart Ballet's *Swan Lake and Onegin*.

### *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 stage performances the carnival featured interactive programmes and activities such as pre-festival school tours, exhibitions, workshops and outdoor carnivals. A highlight was *Sporting Fantasia*, a programme series in support of the Beijing Olympics and the Olympic Equestrian Events that opened with *AEROS*, a programme that blended the physical virtuosity of gymnastics with the beauty of dance. Some 134 300 people attended the carnival's 402 events with the participation of 28 local and 15 overseas performing groups.

### *New Vision Arts Festival*

The fourth New Vision Arts Festival continued its avant-garde style of programming featuring innovative and outstanding cross-cultural music, dance and theatre performances with an Asian focus. A number of local and overseas co-commissioned projects were featured, including the opening performances of the Nederlands Dans Theater I's new work *Renature* by Wayne McGregor, *Liang Hongyu*, a melting pot of Chinese regional operas co-commissioned with the Holland Festival and Zuni Icosahedron's *God Came to China*. Other highlights of the festival included the *Fantasy of the Red Queen* by Liu Sola and Ensemble Modern; *The Tempest* by the Contemporary Legend Theatre of Taiwan and film director Tsui Hark; and the Hong Kong-UK collaboration of verbatim theatre by Theatre du Pif. A total of 37 visiting and 30 local arts groups performed in 96 events during the five-week festival from October 23 to November 23 with a total attendance of more than 75 000 people.

### *Hong Kong International Film Festival*

Presented by the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society Limited, the 32nd Hong Kong International Film Festival offered a wide range of programmes. Awards presented during the event included the Asian Digital Competition awards, the Humanitarian Awards for Documentaries, the FIPRESCI Prize, the SIGNIS Award and the Fresh Wave Short Film Competition Award. More than 280 films from over 50 countries were shown during the 21-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 \$974,000 to support eight heritage-related activities and research projects.

## **Museums**

### *Hong Kong Museum of Art*

In 2008, the Hong Kong Museum of Art jointly presented with major overseas museums the exhibitions 'Paris 1730-1930: A Taste for China' and 'Otium Ludens — Leisure and Play: Ancient Relics of the Roman Empire'. The former showed the art inspired and influenced by Chinese aesthetic taste which flourished in Paris from the 18th to the 20th century, while the latter illustrated the power, politics and luxurious lifestyle enjoyed 2 000 years ago by the elite of the Roman Empire. These were followed by a touring exhibition entitled 'Strolling in the Fragrant Garden: Paintings of Ju Chao and Ju Lian' which featured the finest selections of the Two Jus from museums in Hong Kong and Guangdong.

By invitation from the Ministry of Culture in China as part of the Olympic and Paralympic Games celebration, an exhibition 'Made in Hong Kong', featuring the work of Hong Kong artists, was shown at the Beijing World Art Museum. Another exhibition, 'Story of the Horse', celebrated Hong Kong's hosting of the equestrian events of the 2008 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The 'Hong Kong Art: Open Dialogue' exhibition series, arranged by guest curators, provoked a dialogue between Hong Kong artists and the community as well as among local and overseas artists, the aim being to generate a more dynamic artistic experience. Other thematic exhibitions held during the year included 'A Eulogy of Hong Kong Landscape in Painting: The Art of Huang Bore', 'No Frontiers: The Art of Ding Yanyong' and 'In Salute to Tong King Sum'. These illustrated the profound accomplishments of these veteran Hong Kong masters. These shows and the permanent exhibitions attracted more than 291 000 visitors.

The museum also organised and participated in many educational activities. Some of the activities were co-organised with charity groups and cultural organisations with an aim to promote the arts to the general public and to



encourage art education among the many diverse groups that comprise the greater part of the community. These activities included the 'Summer Art Cadets' training programme and exhibition for the under-privileged, 'Hong Kong Art: Open Dialogue' open forums, International Museum Day 2008, School Cultural Day Scheme and a wide range of in-house programmes. To acquaint the public with the museum's collections, a set of 'Mini Travelling Exhibitions — Collection Highlights of the Hong Kong Museum of Art' was produced for loan to schools and non-profit organisations.

### *Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware*

The Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware collection features 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. Exhibitions held in 2008 included '2007 Tea Ware by Hong Kong Potters' which featured outstanding works by 69 local potters selected from a tea ware competition, the exhibits of which demonstrated the imaginative and creative talents of local potters, and 'The History of Tea: The K S Lo Collection of the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware' featured over 110 artefacts of refined tea ware from the Tang dynasty to the 20th century. About 167 000 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 which were organised in collaboration with the Mainland as well as overseas museums and cultural institutions. The exhibitions included 'The Development of Banks in Shanghai and Hong Kong', 'Cultural Relics of Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture', 'The French Revolutions' and 'Heavenly Horse — The Horse in Chinese Arts and Culture' to celebrate Hong Kong as a co-host city of the Equestrian Events of the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games. These joint presentations facilitated academic and cultural interflow among Hong Kong, the Mainland and other countries. The museum also continued to collaborate with government departments and non-profit-making institutions to present exhibitions which included 'SUPERTRADER Hong Kong: 40 Years of Trade', 'From New Year Prints to Propaganda Posters: Selections from the China Archives of Publications', 'Hong Kong Observatory — Weathering the Storms for 125 Years', 'Women of Hong Kong — A Century of Contribution and Development' and '80 Years of Broadcasting in Hong Kong'. More than 634 000 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, Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery, Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum and Law Uk Folk Museum.

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', 'Cultural Relics of the Eight Banners of the

Manchu' and 'Military Relics in Hong Kong'. Some 132 000 people visited the museum during the year.

The Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum housed in Kom Tong Hall, a historic building, holds exhibits relating to Dr Sun's life and career. In addition to the two permanent exhibitions, a thematic exhibition '1911 Revolution in China: Francis Stafford's Photo Exhibition' was organised. Some 90 000 people visited the museum during the year.

The Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery, situated at Quarry Bay Park, is centred around the decommissioned fireboat Alexander Grantham and features an exhibition on the history of fireboats and sea rescue. During the year it attracted more than 229 000 visitors.

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 39 000 and 18 000 visitors respectively.

### *Hong Kong Heritage Museum*

The museum presented a number of thematic exhibitions in the year, including 'The Ancient Olympic Games' to tie in with the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games, 'The Majestic Stage: The Story of Cantonese Opera Theatres', 'The Children's Paradise — The Art of Lo Koon Chiu' showcasing the work of this celebrated children's comic artist, 'The Exotic Spirit — The Art of Chiu Sai-kwong and The Perseverant Spirit — The Art of Lee Yue-hong' under the Chao Shao-an Student Exhibition Series 3 and 4, highlighting the perpetuation of the Lingnan School of painting in Hong Kong, 'Hong Kong Design Series 6: Jewellery for Life' curated by the veteran jewellery designer Ms Lo Kai-yin with the participation of local manufacturers and jewellery designers, and exhibition on the 'Intangible Cultural Heritage in China' introducing China's rich and diversified intangible cultural heritage. These exhibitions attracted 415 388 visitors.

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 several coaches. The station building was constructed 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 housed in a Hakka village, which was built in the late 19th century. It comprises several 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.

The Sam Tung Uk Museum, Hong Kong Railway Museum and Sheung Yiu Folk Museum attracted 499 393 visitors between them during the year.

### *Hong Kong Science Museum*

To coincide with the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Hong Kong Science Museum organised 'Sports Arena', an interactive exhibition that

demonstrated the nature, skills and scientific principles behind a number of Olympic events, plus specially made exhibits paying tribute to contributions by local institutes and organisations.

Other major special exhibitions during the year included 'Wildlife Photographers of the Year', comprising over 200 winning photographs that combined artistic perspective, technical expertise and the natural beauty of animals in the wild, and 'The Deep' which featured videos, photographs and specimens of unusual animals of the deep sea.

The Government of Yunnan Province generously donated the fossilised skeleton of a Lufengosaur to the museum. This very first dinosaur species to be studied in China was also the first complete dinosaur skeleton excavated, conserved, mounted and named. Measuring 3.8 metres long and 2.2 metres tall, the skeleton is preserved in excellent condition and mounted in a natural posture.

The museum also staged a special exhibition on China's First Spacewalk Mission featuring China's manned space programme and spacewalk mission by Shenzhou-7 astronauts. Exhibits included the re-entry capsule of the Shenzhou-7 spacecraft, spacesuits and the national flag displayed during the spacewalk.

The Museum's Science News Corner staged three thematic exhibitions: 'Artificial Intelligence and Railway Engineering Works Scheduling', 'Palmprint Identification System' and 'Brain Development and Disease'. These were organised jointly with the City University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology to introduce their latest scientific projects. These exhibitions together with the permanent ones attracted more than 1 077 000 visitors.

Five renowned scholars from the Mainland and Hong Kong delivered lectures at the 'Distinguished Chinese Scientists Lecture Series 2008', 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 covered astrophysics, polar science, earthquakes, energy resources and neuroscience.

During the year, the museum worked with academic institutions, professional bodies and government departments on a number of special programmes and projects under such titles as 'Science Alive', 'Fun Science Competition', 'Primary Science Project Exhibition', 'Hong Kong Student Science Project Competition', 'Robotic Festival', and 'Science in the Public Service' Campaign'.

### *Hong Kong Space Museum*

The year saw the completion of the 'Hong Kong Space Museum Sai Kung iObservatory', which is located in the Lady MacLehose Holiday Village. The Stanley Ho Space Theatre was closed from November 17, 2008 for a major refurbishment, the first since its opening in 1980. The project included the installation of a new digital planetarium system and the replacement of seats with the Multi-Language and Interactive System.

More than 670 000 people visited the museum's exhibitions and 320 000 people attended the educational and extension programmes in 2008.

### *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 storerooms for the collection. It has already acquired more than 8 000 films and 897 000 related materials, mainly through donations and deposits. Major acquisitions in 2008 included award trophies from Mr Johnnie To and memorabilia of actress Lin Dai. More than 236 000 people visited the archive in 2008.

### *Art Promotion Office*

The Art Promotion Office organised numerous activities and projects on public and community art in collaboration with various partners for the promotion of art appreciation and public participation.

In response to a call from the Commission of Culture and Olympic Education of the International Olympic Committee for a linking of the worlds of art and sport, an 'Olympic Sport and Art Contest 2008' was organised for submission of sculptural and graphical works. Two selected entries were delivered to Switzerland to participate in the international contest in April 2008. The 'Artist in the Neighborhood Scheme' entered its fourth round and a series of travelling exhibitions was planned for presentation in 2008-2010. The opening exhibition of the scheme and three solo exhibitions of selected works took place and in addition, the 'Mobile Art Gallery 2008', a partnership project with the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and two outside organisations, was mounted during the summer. Graphic artwork reproductions of 21 entries by local artists selected by competition were displayed on public buses and bus shelters from June to December 2008.

### *Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre*

The Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre which is equipped with nine art studios, a lecture theatre, an exhibition hall and a multi-purpose room, focuses on training in the visual arts, promotion and provision of facilities for professionals to hire. An 'Art Specialist Course 2008-09' was run with a graduation exhibition scheduled for January 2009. To support and promote the development of Hong Kong art, the centre also organised a series of New Media Art workshops and video screenings of works by contemporary artists.

### *Central Conservation Section*

The Central Conservation Section's role is to look after and preserve the public museum collections for present and future generations to view and appreciate. It has facilities for maintaining and treating more than 610 cultural objects, including paintings, documents, prints, textiles, metals, ceramics, organic materials and archaeological finds.

Improvement and modification works were carried aboard the newly-opened Fireboat Alexander Grantham to enhance public access and ensure a safe

environment for visitors. With the assistance of the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the latest 3-D laser scanning technique was employed to record the setting and physical condition of all of the structural components and design features of the fireboat to facilitate continued monitoring and the proposed production of a virtual tour of the inaccessible zones.

The year's educational and extension activities included 50 workshops, guided tours, thematic talks and seminars, and school programmes. These attracted a total of 2 677 visitors and participants. The Conservation Volunteer team generously contributed a total of 397 service hours to various conservation projects.

The section was represented at the 2008 International Institute for Conservation Congress and the 2008 International Council of Museums Conservation Committee Conference, at which three conservation papers and two conservation posters were presented.

### **Public Libraries**

The LCSD operates the network of Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) comprising 66 static and 10 mobile libraries. It also manages the Books Registration Office. The public libraries system provides free library and information services to meet the community's needs for knowledge, information, research and recreation and to support lifelong and continuous education. It promotes reading and the literary arts and offers library extension activities to people of all ages.

Hong Kong's public libraries hold a total of 10.73 million books and 1.6 million multimedia materials. They serve 3.6 million registered borrowers who borrowed more than 59.37 million books and other library materials during the year.

#### *Hong Kong Central Library*

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 2.36 million books and other items and provides a full range of library facilities, including 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.

Facilities for hire, include a 1 500 square-metre exhibition gallery, a 290-seat lecture theatre, two activity rooms, a music practice room and eight discussion rooms.

In addition to its regular cultural activities and talks, the library organises a diversity of programmes for large audiences.

#### *Improvements to Library Services*

The Hong Kong Public Libraries work continuously to improve their service by increasing the stock of books, enhancing reference and information services, developing their use of information technology and promoting a reading culture.

Throughout the year, the public libraries worked closely with the District Councils and local organisations to promote and develop further the Libraries@neighbourhood, a community-libraries partnership scheme. At year-end there were 86 community libraries throughout 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. 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, the Business and Industry Library, the Creativity and Innovation Resource Centre, the Basic Law Library at City Hall Public Library, and the Education Resource Centre at Kowloon Public Library. In addition, the Sha Tin Public Library hosts the specialised Sports & Fitness Collection for lending and public reference.

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 co-operating libraries directly for information about their respective regions. A wide range of electronic resources, including an online database, electronic books, web resource guides and topical resources guides are posted on the library website for public reference. A thematic website offering sports and fitness information was launched in June.

### *Information Technology Initiatives and Digital Library Initiatives*

Hong Kong's Library Automation System is one of the largest computerised systems of its kind in the world. It provides 24-hour internet library services, including online catalogue searching and reservation and renewal of library materials. In 2008, more than 17.86 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 and it will also carry out a pilot test on using Radio Frequency Identification technology for enhancing its services. The HKPL continued to expand the application of information technology and started to provide Octopus payment service at all static libraries in February. With the launch of the Government Wi-Fi programme, free Wi-Fi service was made available at 66 static libraries.

In 2008, over 655 000 readers were registered to use their smart ID cards as library cards. Over 210 internet workstations were equipped with e-Cert compatible smart card readers.

The Multimedia Information System (MMIS) which has received a number of awards both locally and internationally for its use of advanced technology, 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. With the upgrading of its operating system in 2008, it continued to provide users with an effective and versatile multi-media information service.

### *Outreach Programmes and Promotion of Reading and Literary Arts*

Outreach programmes form an integral part of the library services. In 2008, the HKPL continued to organise a balanced mix of activities for people of all ages. Regular programmes including storytelling sessions, book exhibitions, and community talks were held throughout the year. A total of 19 555 library outreach programmes were conducted in 2008. A variety of reading programmes and reading-related activities were organised to promote reading and sustain an interest in reading. These included a 'Summer Reading Month' designed for children and their families.

Teens' Reading Clubs were formed at public libraries during the year and Family Reading Clubs were set up in major libraries. Creative competitions held under the title 'Sport and I' were organised to celebrate the '4.23 World Book Day' and the Olympic Games.

Other library programmes organised in the year to tie in with the Olympic Games in 2008 were the 'Olympic Stories Series: Enlightening your Soul', the roving exhibition '2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Event' and a roving book exhibition, 'Sports and the Olympic Games', a 'Popular Science Talk on the Olympic Series: Sports and Science', a 'Talk Series: Olympics and Philosophy', and a special reading activity 'Lighten your Reading Torch - 2008 Summer Reading Programme' for children and students. Reading Corners were also set up at the Olympic Live Sites.

HKPL continued to hold special programmes and competitions to promote creative writing and appreciation of literature. These included the seventh Hong Kong Literature Festival organised in conjunction with the Hong Kong Arts Development Council as a hub of activities to bring together literary talent and promote creative writing, reading and literary appreciation. The libraries joined forces during the year to organise the Awards for Creative Writing in Chinese, a Chinese Poetry Writing Competition and a competition on story writing in Chinese for students. They also partnered other organisations in holding territory-wide reading sessions for the general public.

### *Cultural Exchange*

During the year, Hong Kong's public libraries continued to co-operate and strengthen ties with their counterparts elsewhere using the Internet to keep in touch

and share library news and matters of mutual interest. An exhibition, 'Memories of the Past: Joint Exhibition of Old Photos' displaying life in Hong Kong, Macao, Shenzhen and Guangdong in the last century was held as part of a cultural exchange between the Hong Kong Central Library, the Sun Yat-sen Library of Guangdong Province, Shenzhen Library and Macao Central Library. The HKPL and the Shenzhen Library also held creative writing competitions to celebrate the '4.23 World Book Day'. Shenzhen's winning works were displayed alongside Hong Kong's winning entries during these events.

### *Books Registration Office*

The Books Registration Office helps 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 and this may also be accessed through the Internet. In 2008, the office registered 12 969 books, and 14 033 periodicals, and 827 new publisher prefixes.

### **Sport and Recreation**

Hong Kong people are increasingly taking up sport and using public recreational facilities. 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 731 100 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 73 applications for billiard establishments, nine 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. During the year, eleven sports were covered by the Elite Training Programme — badminton, cycling, fencing, rowing, squash, swimming, table tennis, tenpin bowling, triathlon, windsurfing and wushu.

The institute also supports outstanding athletes in other sports under the Individual Athletes Support Scheme and the Disabled Sports Elite Training Programme. During the year, its activities focused on the preparation of athletes for



the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and planning for the redevelopment of the Institute.

### **Sporting Achievements**

Hong Kong athletes achieved remarkable results in several international and regional sporting events in 2008. They won a total of 155 gold, 147 silver and 164 bronze medals<sup>1</sup>. At the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games, Hong Kong athletes garnered five gold, three silver and three bronze medals. Hong Kong also won three gold, three silver and two bronze medals at the 2008 Bali Asian Beach Games, ranking 6th among the 27 participating countries and regions.

### **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 co-ordinate 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 co-ordinated 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 2007 was held in conjunction with the federation's annual spring dinner in March

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<sup>1</sup> 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 and Sports Association for the Physically Disabled and Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped in 2008.

2008. Cycling star Wong Kam Po was awarded the most coveted Bank of China (Hong Kong) Best of Best Hong Kong Sports Star Award.

Hong Kong sports entered a new era in 2008. With the successful staging of the 2008 Olympiad Equestrian Events, Hong Kong demonstrated to the world its strength in organising international sports event. Apart from this, the people in Hong Kong cultivated the Olympic values of 'Solidarity, Friendship and Fair Play' through their participation in the Equestrian event. This will form the foundation for hosting the 5th East Asian Games in Hong Kong in 2009.

### **Hong Kong Paralympic Committee and Sports Association for the Physically Disabled**

The Hong Kong Paralympic Committee and Sports Association for the Physically Disabled (HKPC&SAPD) is the only Hong Kong sports organisation recognised by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) as a member of the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) eligible to select the Hong Kong team for the Paralympic Games, Asian Paralympic Games, All China Games, and the World & Regional Championships. The HKPC&SAPD plays an active role in organising regional functions and developing a close working relationship with their counterparts in neighbouring countries and territories to raise the standard of performance of disabled athletes in Hong Kong and Asia.

This year has been a busy, rewarding and memorable one for the association which was involved in the challenging task of organising the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, held on Chinese soil for the first time, and the 2008 Paralympic Equestrian Events which took place simultaneously in Hong Kong.

The 22 disabled athletes did Hong Kong proud by clinching five Gold, three Silver and three Bronze medals, to boost Hong Kong to 26th position among the 147 nations and territories which competed in the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games.

The association worked closely with a number of government departments, sporting bodies and the Hong Kong Tourism Board to publicise the Paralympics and Equestrian Events before and during the Games.

To attract fresh talent, the association embarked on an 'Out Reach' programme for students in special schools. The scheme generated a lot of interest among the students and stood the association's talent scouting efforts in good stead.

On the whole, HKPC&SAPD athletes did notably well in the 2008 international sporting arena by winning a total of 61 medals: 29 gold, 17 silver and 15 bronze.

### **Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped**

The Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped develops, promotes and organises sporting activities for people with intellectual disability to help them develop fully their potential in sports, to help them cultivate positive attitudes in sportsmanship and to facilitate their integration into the community. The association provides sports training and competitions for about 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 many international competitions during the year and made the most of these events to sharpen their skills. Highlights included the 2008 Daegu International Adaptive Indoor Rowing Competition in Korea at which Hong Kong won one gold medal; the 4th INAS-FID Open European Swimming Championships in Poland at which Hong Kong won 13 gold, nine silver and nine bronze medals; the 4th INAS-FID Open European Table Tennis Championships in Spain at which Hong Kong won five gold, three silver and four bronze medals.

Hong Kong athletes also achieved excellent results at the 2008 Special Olympics East Asia Regional Games in Macao, the 2008 Special Olympics East Asia Regional Golf Competition in Korea, the 2008 Special Olympics East Asia Regional Table Tennis Competition in Chinese Taipei and the 2008 Special Olympics China National Football Competition and Special Olympics East Asia Regional Soccer Competition in China. A total of 99 medals, comprising 44 gold, 32 silver and 23 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 \$13.12 billion to the public purse in 2007-08, or about 6.5 per cent of all taxes collected during the year. It is also one of the city's largest employers, with nearly 25 000 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 given to charity. In 2007-08 it donated more than \$1.05 billion to some 100 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. During the year, the club received a Responsible Gaming Award from the World Lottery Association, honouring its employee training programme as the industry's best worldwide. Reforms to the horse race betting duty structure since 2006 have achieved some success in helping the club regain revenue from illegal and offshore bookmakers, but this remains a matter of concern. Further discussions are now under way on an easing of tax and regulatory measures that could enhance the club's competitiveness in the light of a growing number of alternative gambling opportunities in the region.

As well as addressing current and longer-term social challenges through its donations, the club is proactive in responding to emergency needs in Hong Kong and the Mainland. Following both the severe snowstorms that hit several Mainland

provinces in February 2008 and the Sichuan earthquake in May, it made immediate donations to relief agencies and launched public fund-raising drives through its racecourses, clubhouses and off-course betting branch network. The club has since pledged a further \$1 billion to support reconstruction projects in Sichuan and has put four initial school and hospital rebuilding projects in hand. In December, it was honoured with a 2008 China Charity Award from the Mainland's Ministry of Civil Affairs in recognition of its outstanding charity work.

The club played a major role in Hong Kong's successful staging of the equestrian events of the Beijing 2008 Olympics and Paralympics, constructing world-class equestrian venues at its own cost and providing a range of supporting professional services including veterinary care, horse transportation and on-site equine drug testing. The club's expertise in these areas helped Hong Kong win many international accolades for the quality of its Olympic equestrian facilities. In total, the club's contribution to the Olympics and Paralympics exceeded \$1.2 billion.

The club has also entered into a long-term agreement with the International Olympic Committee which paves the way for the establishment of an Olympic Museum in Hong Kong to preserve the city's Olympic legacy for future generations. In addition, it has pledged \$50 million to extend its sponsorship of the Hong Kong Equestrian Team for a further four years and establish a new Junior Equestrian Team.

Hong Kong continues to strengthen its reputation in the horse racing world, with three locally-trained horses ranked in the world's top ten at the end of the 2007-08 season, a remarkable achievement for a jurisdiction with such a small horse population.

The Cathay Pacific Hong Kong International Races held at Sha Tin Racecourse each December have become widely recognised as the Turf World Championship, with four International Group One events being staged on a single day for a total purse of \$62 million, a spectacular day of sport broadcast to millions of racing fans around the world. The 2008 International Races attracted a record 35 top thoroughbreds from 10 other countries and regions, with Hong Kong-trained horses taking the honours in two of the four races — Inspiration winning the Hong Kong Sprint and Good Ba Ba successfully defending his Mile title.

## **Recreational and Sports Programmes**

In 2008, the LCSD organised some 34 600 recreational and sports programmes for about 2.29 million participants of all ages and abilities at a total cost of \$154 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 12 000 young people took part in 270 events organised in 2008.

### *'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, sports centres, libraries, camps, and youth and elderly centres 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 85 000 people took part in some 1 450 programmes of this kind.

### *Territory-wide Events*

The Corporate Games, designed specially for working people, attracted some 8 500 people from 273 industrial and commercial organisations to take part in 10 events organised under the programme in 2008. The Masters Games, for people aged 35 and above, attracted some 3 500 contestants to participate in six competitions.

### *Young Athletes Training Scheme*

In 2008, the LCSD commissioned 21 National Sports Associations to provide intermediate level training to teenagers to become athletes under the Young Athletes Training Scheme. Some 28 000 young people joined the programme. Those showing 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 Sports Award Scheme. In 2008, more than 7 600 sporting events were organised for over 598 000 students.

### *Community Sports Club Project*

The Community Sports Club (CSC) Project is organised by the LCSD in collaboration with the NSAs. In 2008, the LCSD provided support to about 340 CSCs to organise 1 900 sports training activities for 42 000 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 182 sports training classes were held for 2 100 participants under the CSC Enhancement Programme. The CSCs were also encouraged to organise more interclub competitions to raise the standard of sports at the community level.

## Sports Subvention Scheme

The LCSD is responsible for providing subvention to the National Sports Associations 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 26 sporting organisations were provided with funds amounting to about \$185 million by the LCSD. Over 10 100 programmes for different sports were organised by the NSAs and other organisations, attracting 701 783 participants. Among the most popular programmes were the Youth Football Scheme, Hong Kong Youth (Boys and Girls) Basketball Training Scheme and Young Athletes Table Tennis Training Scheme.

In 2008, the NSAs were given subsidies under the scheme to stage international events in Hong Kong. These included the Tennis Champions Challenge, 2008 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 2008, 17th Super Kung Sheung Cup International Basketball Invitation Championships, 13th Asian Cities Gold Cup Taekwondo Championships, and 13th Tour of the South China Sea (Cycling).

## Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

### *Beijing 2008 Olympic Torch Relay in Hong Kong*

Hong Kong was one of the 122 cities to host the Beijing 2008 Olympic Torch Relay and the first stop on Chinese soil, welcoming back the Olympic Flame after its global journey across five continents. The HKSAR Government worked hand in hand with the Beijing Organising Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad, the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China and the relevant organisations to stage this event.

### *Beijing 2008 Olympic Live Sites in Hong Kong*

Hong Kong was chosen to co-host the Olympic Equestrian Events and thus become an Olympic city. Three official Olympic Live Sites were set up to allow the public to share the fun. The Live Sites set up in Victoria Park and Sha Tin Park were open to the public during the main Games and the one in Sha Tin Park was also open during the Paralympic Games. Over 100 000 people participated in a variety of activities offered at the Live Sites.

### *Free Admission Scheme of LCSD Leisure Facilities*

To support the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, to encourage the public to do exercise more regularly and to promote community sports with a view to improving the quality of life, the department launched a Free Admission Scheme under which individual members of the public could use most of the LCSD's leisure facilities free of charge from July 1 to September 30, including sports centres, squash courts, tennis courts, public swimming pools, water sports centres and holiday camps. Over

12 million people participated in this scheme with a daily attendance of about 140 000.

### **'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 National Sports Associations 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 2008, nine 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, develop publicity and marketing strategies, and advise on the venues and facilities.

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 preparatory work being done for the event. The event was widely publicised through promotional activities during the Hong Kong Flower Show, the launching of an EAG Mascot, a Volunteer Programme, a Souvenir Shop, an EAG Theme Song and the unveiling of a countdown clock at a One-year Countdown Ceremony.

The Government has been upgrading 13 existing LCSD sports venues and facilities to the required international standards for the organisation of competition events for the Games. The new Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground will be used for the Games' athletic events. These new and upgraded projects will be completed in the first half of 2009.

### **The 11th National Winter Games of the People's Republic of China**

The 11th National Winter Games of the People's Republic of China was held in Qiqihar in January 2008. A total of 26 Hong Kong athletes took part in three competition events. They achieved good performance in the women's single short figure skating programme and men's ice hockey events.

### **2008 Bun Carnival**

Tens of thousands of local and overseas visitors converged on Cheung Chau Island to watch the popular annual Bun Carnival which was held from April 26 to May 13. The carnival was given extensive coverage by the local and international news media. More than 7 000 people took part in the competitions and other activities, the highlight of which was the bun scrambling competition in which participants vie with each other to retrieve buns from the exterior of the 14-metre high bun tower.

## 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 427 000 people attended 37 events at the venue in 2008.

### *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, 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, 116 046 people participated in events at the water sports centres and 589 195 people visited and stayed at the holiday camps.

### *Other Sports and Recreational Venues*

The LCSD manages 88 sports centres, 37 swimming pool complexes, 260 tennis courts, 294 squash courts, 24 sports grounds, four golf driving ranges and two public riding schools.

Nine major new recreation and sports projects were completed in 2008. They are the Sham Shui Po Park — Stage 2, district open space sites in Fanling, Tung Chung, Tsuen Wan, Tseung Kwan O, and Tin Shui Wai, and local open space sites in Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan and Sheung Shui. Work on 16 other major projects throughout Hong Kong is 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 2008, 10.57 million people used the beaches and 11.67 million visited public swimming pools. 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 and Deep Water Bay, lifeguards are on duty during the winter as well.

## Parks Managed by LCSD

The LCSD manages about 1 477 parks and gardens of different sizes, including 24 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 developed 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 mammalian 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. Fifteen endangered species of mammals, birds and reptiles lived there in 2008. The bird collection is one of the most comprehensive in Asia. It comprises about 400 birds of 140 species. Fifteen of these species have reared offspring there. The mammal collection consists of 70 animals of 18 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. A new education and exhibition centre was completed in 2008 to provide teaching facilities for participants in guided visits and for the display of botanical and zoological specimens.

### *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 resemble a tropical rainforest in which about 600 birds of 90 different species are kept, including hornbills and pelicans. Some bird species, notably the Maroon-breasted Crowned Pigeon, Yellow-faced Mynah, Bali Mynah and Rainbow Lorikeet successfully reared broods during the year.

The conservatory has three sections: the 'Display Plant House', 'Dry Plant House' and 'Humid Plant House'. Adjustable environmental control equipment is installed in these to simulate different climatic conditions for plants from arid regions and tropical environments.

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-coded zones. The exhibits 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 and models of 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 in its training programme enabling participants to gain insights and skills that can be applied to work and real life situations. More than 8 000 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 co-operation 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.

The organisation also conducts tailor-made courses for corporations and government departments in Hong Kong and in 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 9 000 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.

The training activities have been carefully designed to cope with different weather conditions and the special requirements of young people of different aptitudes and backgrounds. Once on board, participants are regarded as members of the ship's crew and they have to take part in the onboard activities. Under the guidance of experienced instructors, they are trained to face new challenges and participate in programmes that build self-confidence and team spirit.

### **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 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 30 000 life members and 25 000 individual and corporate members. In January, the Association organised the Ngong Ping Charity Walk at the scenic North Lantau Island Country Park. It attracted over 1 200 participants and raised much needed funds for hostel improvement, environmental protection and conservation projects.

### **Country and Marine Parks**

Some 40 per cent of Hong Kong's total land area has been designated as country parks and special areas for nature conservation, outdoor recreation and nature education. With the opening of the Lantau North (Extension) Country Park in 2008, Hong Kong now has 24 country parks and 17 special areas, providing extensive hiking trails, barbecue, picnic and camp sites and visitors centres which attracted over 12.5 million visitors in 2008.

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 2008, the park attracted over 430 000 visitors. The park also provided conservation education programmes to over 200 000 students and visitors in 2008.

## Green Promotion/Initiatives

### *Green Hong Kong Campaign*

Various community and educational activities were organised in 2008 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, Best Landscape Award and promotional talks.

More than 790 schools and kindergartens took part in a 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 1 080 schools participated in a 'One Person, One Flower' programme. Pansy seedlings were given to students to plant at home or in their schools.

The LCSD's Community Garden Programme was carried out in all the scheme's 18 districts. The scheme provides for one community garden to be built in each district except Southern District, which has two. Forty-four gardening courses were conducted during the year, attended by 9 000 participants. A total of 29 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 organised on the sidelines of the show. More than 200 horticultural organisations from 21 countries took part in the 2008 show in March at Victoria Park, attracting more than 548 000 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 maintains 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 36.5 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 Beautification of Footbridges programme

in several districts throughout Hong Kong. Flower pots containing *Bougainvillea*, *Al lamanda cathartica*, *Aspa ragus de nsiflorus 'Sprengeri'* and *Ophiopogon japonicus* have been placed 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 cultural and arts, sports and all-round development activities for children and young people aged between six and 25 during the summer holidays. In 2008, the slogan 'Bring Out Your Energy, Discover Your Potential' was adopted to commemorate the Beijing Olympic Games and the 40th Anniversary of SYP. Around 12 000 SYP activities were organised with more than 1.7 million participants. The total cost amounted to about \$44 million, of which \$16.5 million was donated by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. The balance was met by subvention from the Government and District Councils, private donation and participants' fees.

#### *Websites*

Home Affairs Bureau: [www.hab.gov.hk](http://www.hab.gov.hk)

Leisure and Cultural Services Department: [www.lcsd.gov.hk](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk)

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department: [www.afcd.gov.hk](http://www.afcd.gov.hk)