

Chapter 19

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 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 sports, recreation, culture and heritage are co-ordinated by the Home Affairs Bureau. Organisations that help to draw up these policies include the Sports 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, the Major Sports Events, and the Community Sports Committees 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 foster co-operative interaction between sports, cultural and community organisations.

During 2009, the LCSD organised several large-scale exhibitions, some of which were in celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China. It also organised cultural performances, ranging from music and dance to opera and sporting events.

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 (DCs), the National Sports Associations (NSAs) under the auspices of the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong China, District Sports Associations, and schools to

promote a sport-for-all concept and encourage people of all ages and from all walks of life to participate in sports and recreational activities.

The Environment

The LCSD has set out an extensive programme involving the planting of trees in parks, playgrounds and roadsides, implementing the Government's 'greening' policy. It also organises various educational and community activities aimed at increasing public awareness of the importance of environmentally friendly living.

The Arts

It is the Government's policy to provide an environment conducive to artistic expression and creation that encourages free participation in all aspects of cultural life.

The Government is committed to the preservation of local arts and culture. Cantonese opera was inscribed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity following a joint application made to it by the Guangdong, Macao Special Administrative Region and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region governments through the Central Government in Beijing. It is the first time for Hong Kong to have an item of world intangible cultural heritage.

Committees

Four committees for 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 in Hong Kong.

Following a recommendation by the Committee on Performing Arts, the Government has since 2007 put all the major professional performing arts companies under one roof — the Home Affairs Bureau — as well as set up a Funding Committee for the Performing Arts to advise the bureau on funding for these companies. The LCSD also launched a partnership scheme for the department's venues in 2009.

The Government also introduced measures to improve the services and operation of the public museums, having regard to the recommendations put forward by the Committee on Museums.

On the recommendation of the Committee on Libraries, the Government set up a Public Library Advisory Committee to advise the Government on the overall development strategy for libraries.

The Cantonese Opera Development Fund, since its inception in 2005 up to the end of 2009, had provided financial support amounting to about \$25 million to some 280 Cantonese opera projects.

Major Cultural and Arts Events

As part of its effort to make the arts more accessible to the community and build audiences, in the autumn the Government implemented a programme named 'Creative October' that offered more than 200 events including concerts, theatre, dance, exhibitions, films and thematic festivals. Starting in November, a two-month long project under the title 'Budding Winter' introduced to the public a total of 93 works by budding artists and university arts students. These were shown in four popular parks and were supported by 282 guided tours for schools and members of the public.

Hong Kong Arts Development Council

Established in 1995, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) is dedicated to planning, promoting and supporting the broad development of the arts in Hong Kong, including the literary, performing and visual arts, film and media arts. Apart from encouraging public participation in the arts and advocating arts education, the HKADC also endeavours to advance arts criticism, raise the standards of arts administration and strengthen arts policy research.

One of the core tasks of the HKADC is funding the arts, with particular attention to emerging artists and small and medium sized arts groups. Apart from the existing one-year, multi-project, devolved and project grants, in 2009 a two-year grant was introduced to nurture the professional development of local arts organisations. An Internship Scheme was launched to groom talent and supply new blood to the industry, while the Sunbeam Theatre Xiqu Performance Venue Subsidy Scheme together with the launch of Jockey Club Performing Arts Venue Subsidy Scheme addressed the various needs of artists and arts groups at different stages of development.

Large-scale promotional events held in 2009 included the Hong Kong Arts Development Awards 2008, the Recognition Ceremony of the 1st Arts Ambassadors-in-School Scheme, and the 1st Fresh Wave Short Film Festival. These gave recognition to students, individuals and groups for their excellence and contribution to the arts, and promoted wider participation in arts activities.

The HKADC teamed up with a number of organisations in activities promoting the arts. These included: 'Seminar by Leading Literary Figures' and 'Critics' Recommendation' jointly held with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council at the Hong Kong Book Fair 2009; commissioned magazine articles on events organised or supported by the HKADC; and 'Arts Classmates', a radio programme jointly produced with the Education and Cultural Unit of Radio Television Hong Kong.

The Community Arts Activities Enhancement Scheme stimulated local arts activities by forging closer ties with community-based arts groups. The Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre Community Arts Promotion Scheme, which accepted

applications from the end of 2009, is also aimed at encouraging territory-wide community arts activities and enriching people's experience of the arts.

Acting as a bridge between local and international art scenes, the HKADC organised and participated in the Venice Biennale 53rd International Art Exhibition and the 5th China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industry Fair, taking Hong Kong arts onto the world stage.

In recent years, the HKADC has enhanced its research into and survey of the ecology of the arts, tracking and collecting industry data useful for policy making and planning its 'Hong Kong Annual Arts Survey' launched in 2009 to collect statistics on industry growth and trends in Hong Kong. The inaugural issue featured the data for 2007-8.

Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts

Established in 1984, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts offers professional education, training and research facilities in the performing arts, including music, dance, drama, theatre and entertainment arts, film and television, and Chinese traditional theatre.

During 2009, the academy launched a Master of Fine Arts in Film Production Degree programme. This completed the process of offering Master's degree programmes in all five schools of the academy, covering dance, music, drama, film and television, and theatre and entertainment arts.

In total, these five postgraduate programmes attracted 95 students in the 2009-10 academic year, while the academy's Extension and Continuing Education for Life (EXCEL) programme enrolled 6 367 students in 340 arts courses in 2009.

Hong Kong Arts Centre

The Hong Kong Arts Centre was established in 1974. Its mission is to nurture creativity, arts and culture by providing contemporary arts programmes and education in the arts. A 19-storey Arts Centre Building in Wan Chai houses galleries, theatres, a cinema, studios, classrooms and offices under one roof. It can provide up to about 4 600 square metres of floor space for cultural and arts events.

It is committed to bringing a wide and diverse range of arts and cultural events to the community. It collaborates with various arts groups to stage events at the Arts Centre and other locations. In May 2009 it launched a series of monthly free 'Street Music' events to help art lovers and new arts enthusiasts to explore different art forms.

Founded in 2000, the Hong Kong Art School is a division of the Arts Centre. It runs award-bearing programmes in arts education ranging from diploma to degree courses. The school acquired its own campus in Shau Kei Wan in 2009.

The Fringe Club

The Fringe Club is housed in what used to be a cold storage warehouse built in 1890, now listed as a historical building. The club moved into the building in 1983 after which the building underwent many phases of renovation to adapt it for use as a contemporary arts space.

The club 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 for overseas tours. Over the past 25 years, more than 500 arts groups from Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America have used the premises for cultural exchanges.

In 2009, the club presented the annual urban City Festival that covers an array of interests and activities, including performing and visual arts, cultural exchange projects, heritage and living history programmes, workshops and urban studies. A highlight was 'Creative China', which showcased new works by young theatre groups from Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Liangshan, Beijing and Shanghai and also featured a symposium and various workshops.

In March, the club organised a photo exhibition on Kaiping Diaolou featuring the multi-storeyed defensive village houses in Kaiping and performed creative dramas based on the same theme. It later presented these programmes at the tourism festival in Kaiping during the National Day celebration periods. During the year, the Fringe Club also assisted visits by Hong Kong artists to Macao, Taipei, Bangkok, Tokyo, Seoul and Chuncheon in Korea.

The Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre

Opened in 2008, the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre (JCCAC) is an innovative arts project that involved converting a nine-storey decommissioned factory estate at Shek Kip Mei into a multi-disciplinary artists' centre. It was initiated by Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) and is managed by a wholly-owned subsidiary of the HKBU. The JCCAC is a registered charity, operating on a self-financing basis, aimed at fostering arts in the community.

The JCCAC provides 124 studio units at affordable rent for artists and arts groups. It also runs two galleries for public hire and a Black Box Theatre specially designed for small scale or experimental theatre and modern dance productions. During the year, the JCCAC organised various activities such as open studios, exhibitions, art stalls and guided tours to promote the arts and culture and nurture creative arts talent.

Major Performing Arts Groups

Chung Ying Theatre Company

Established in 1979, the Chung Ying Theatre Company is a non-profit-making professional theatre company dedicated to creating high quality theatrical productions and to promoting the theatrical arts, exploring cultural exchanges and

enriching cultural life. It is a venue partner of the Kwai Tsing Theatre and Yuen Long Theatre.

In 2009, the company staged the Broadway musical *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, Moliere's classic French farce *The Miser*, an experimental production *Theatre Newbies*, an imaginative family entertainment *Kids at Room 2009*, a series about schools including *Freshly Frozen School*, *The School & I* and *La Jeunesse of the May Fourth Movement*. It also co-presented *The Legend of Nu Wa* with the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra.

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 2009, the company presented five productions — an outdoor gala entitled *The City of K*, and stage performances including *What's Next? Crime Very Dance!*, *As Nothing*, and its 30th Anniversary closing programme, *Dao · Extraordinaire*. The company was also invited to perform in Busan in South Korea and in Guangzhou. The CCDC Dance Centre continued to offer members of the public a variety of dance courses as well as develop new audiences through its outreach programmes.

Hong Kong Ballet

The Hong Kong Ballet celebrated its 30th Anniversary in 2009. The year's highlights included *GALAXY* an international gala featuring the company's dancers and world ballet stars. It also presented four full-length ballets, *Swan Lake*, *Cinderella*, *Romeo & Juliet* and *The Nutcracker* as well as a new choreography showcase, *Up Close & Personal*. Two innovative mixed bill productions — *All Bach* (a programme of the 37th Hong Kong Arts Festival) and *Symphony of Movements* — completed the season.

In January 2009, the company made its debut at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing with *Swan Lake* and in September, it performed *Giselle* at the Poly Theatre in Beijing. In the summer, it staged *Cinderella* at the Macao Cultural Centre.

The company continued to play a prominent role in promoting the art of ballet in the community, reaching over 30 000 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. Its 85 members have been promoting the development of Chinese music under the theme 'Radiating from Hong Kong-Empowering Chinese Music in the World'. It organises over 140 concerts and activities each season.

Under the leadership of its Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Yan Huichang, in 2009 the orchestra organised a large scale event, the 2nd 'Huqin Festival of Hong Kong', which brought together famous huqin players for a series of concert to showcase the beauty of the music produced by huqin, the Chinese two-string lute. The orchestra was also invited to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York in October, receiving 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, it has staged over 100 productions.

During 2009, the company staged 37 performances, attracting a total audience of more than 22 000. The productions included a re-run of *Qingming Riverside*, *Princess Changping*, *Everlasting Love*, *Lingnan Impressions* and *Eagle Companions*. The company gave six performances in Macao at the invitation of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau of the Macao Special Administrative Region. It also gave two performances and a series of dance activities in Tsuen Wan as a venue partner of Tsuen Wan Town Hall.

Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Under the leadership of its Artistic Director and Chief Conductor Edo de Waart, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra continued to scale new heights in musical excellence. Each year it attracts some 200 000 music lovers to about 150 performances. In addition to its concerts in Hong Kong in January, the 90-strong ensemble undertook a major six-concert tour of China, including performances at the Xinghai Concert Hall in Guangzhou, the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing and the Shanghai Grand Theatre. It also collaborated with major artists including conductors Gennadi Rozhdestvensky and David Zinman, soprano Deborah Voigt, pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet and violinist Viktoria Mullova. The orchestra also ran a comprehensive education programme that benefited over 45 000 students.

Hong Kong Repertory Theatre

The Hong Kong Repertory Theatre staged 12 productions in 2009. Highlights included *Caligula* by Albert Camus, Stan Lai's new poetic production *Writing in Water*, the classic French farce *A Flea in Her Ear* by Feydeau, Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Raymond To's *Boundless Movement*, the Broadway musical *SCROOGE* and the original plays *Beautiful Connection* by Cheung Tat-ming and *Bun in the Cave* by Paul Poon. In addition, *The Gin Game* by D L Coburn was taken on tour to Beijing, Shanghai, Xian, Wuhan and Shenzhen in November and December.

The company continued its commitment to drama education and audience building with an extensive range of educational, community and outreach activities. Its partnership with Hong Kong City Hall provided the public with some new theatrical experiences through free performances of *Caligula Overture*, *Silk Road Reborn — An Exploratory Journey* exhibitions, and the monthly script-reading Reader's Theatre.

Hong Kong Sinfonietta

Established in 1990, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta is one of Hong Kong's leading professional orchestras. Under the direction of Music Director Yip Wing-sie since 2002, the orchestra brought classical music to people from all walks of life. In 2009, it gave over 80 performances, including a Beethoven Symphony Cycle, concerts with Pinchas Zukerman, Han-Na Chang and David Garrett, and collaborations with the English National Ballet, Opera Hong Kong and Hong Kong Ballet. Other highlights of the year included its début in Italy and tours to Japan and Macao, with a total of 10 overseas performances.

Zuni Icosahedron

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

In 2009, Artistic Director Danny Yung was awarded the 'Merit Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany' by the German Federal Government in recognition of his contributions to cultural exchanges between Germany and China. A new work of Danny Yung's experimental theatre, *Book of Ghosts* was presented at the 37th Hong Kong Arts Festival. Zuni marked the start of its venue partnership with the Hong Kong Cultural Centre with a festival entitled an 'Architecture is Art'. Curated by Mathias Woo, this festival included exhibitions, cultural exchange conferences, public seminars and theatre performances such as the multimedia series *Looking for Mies, Corbu and Kahn* and Kunqu Opera *A Tale of the Forbidden City*.

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 to cultivate and nurture local artistic talent with the aim of promoting contemporary visual arts and affiliated art forms.

Since its inception, 1a space has produced and organised more than 100 exhibitions and activities, and has taken part in international exchanges, and cultural activities and festivals as well as its activity in interactive community art, arts education, arts criticism and publications. 1a space has played an important role in opening new frontiers for the visual arts scene in Hong Kong and abroad. Highlights of its programmes in 2009 included 'GREEN — through the Kai Tak River'. The programme looked at how art could become part of the process of sustainability and community development and attempted to re-establish the lost connection between man and the natural landscape.

Artist Commune

Artist Commune was established as a non-profit-making arts group in July 1997 and is committed itself mainly to building up dialogue between the arts and the

community. It first set up a studio in the Cheung Fat Industrial Building in Shek Tong Tsui, from where it moved to Oil Street Artists' Village in North Point, and then to the 'Slaughter House' in Cheung Sha Wan. It finally settled down in the 'Cattle Depot Artists' Village in To Kwa Wan in 2001.

In 2009, Artist Commune organised six visual arts programmes, including some of which were responses to social issues such as revitalising cultural heritage.

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 via public programmes and an active website.

More than 25 000 items are available to the public on the AAA's website and in its archives. In addition, the AAA organises workshops, symposia, talks and publications promoting a free exchange of ideas.

With researchers based in Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, New Dehli, Taipei and Tokyo, the AAA acts as an important conduit through which people in the contemporary Asian arts field can network and co-operate.

In 2009, the AAA organised over 20 public programmes, including 'Backroom Conversations' (panel discussions and documentary screenings), a special programme presented by the AAA as the official educational partner of ART HK 09, and a community project, 'Dream Museum Convenience Store: Build Your Dream Museum Collection Everyday', attracting over 10 000 visitors online and in the community. The AAA also hosted its first international artist-in-residence programme, culminating in an on-site installation at the AAA and it commissioned an installation artwork for 'October Contemporary', a citywide exhibition in collaboration with other leading art spaces and institutions.

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 2009, the society organised various activities. 'Hong Kong Visual Arts Education Festival 09/10' was a large-scale integrated visual arts education programme. Other projects covered art education and architecture appreciation, practical development of artwork and creative thinking for a picture book, and collaborations between schools and the community.

Lumennisum

Lumennisum was founded by five veteran photographers and teachers of photography in 2007 as a centre of education, exchange, promotion, resources and sharing of photography. It aims to promote photography as an effective medium for communication and expression by enhancing an individual's perception and skills in handling photographic images.

In 2009, Lumennisum held a series of exhibitions, activities and workshops. Solo exhibitions featured the works of Wong Kan-tai, Dustin Shum, Roger Moore, So

Hing-keung and Yau Leung. Group exhibitions included one by Mainland photographers Wu Jialin and his wife Wu Yuehua, 'Megafauna', 'Burdening Representations — Historical Memory of China from Hong Kong' and 'Portraits From Above' which was co-presented with the Goethe Institute. It also organised photography workshops under the titles 'Dong Jia — II' and 'Kwun Tong Urban Renewal'.

Para/Site Art Space

In 2009, Para/Site Art Space continued its mission of promoting contemporary art in Hong Kong. In addition to thematic exhibitions such as the 'Hong Kong Sound Station' and 'The Horn of Plenty: Excess and Reversibility'. It also worked closely with internationally renowned artists including Tatsumi Orimoto, the Gao Brothers, Surasi Kusolwong, Shahzia Sikander, Joseph Kosuth and Tsang Kin-wah in solo or group exhibitions and performances. Equally active overseas, Para/Site participated in the Biennale of the Canary Islands, the 'subvision. kunst. festival. off.' exhibition in Hamburg, and the 53rd International Art Exhibition of Venice Biennale. It also curated 'This is Hong Kong', an internationally touring video programme.

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 club injected a further \$22 million into the fund to meet increasing demand for support.

The fund awards scholarships enabling 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 2009, the fund awarded three scholarships worth about \$1.5 million.

Music Office

The Music Office promotes knowledge and appreciation of music, especially among young people, through the provision of instrumental and ensemble training and the organisation of various music activities. Its aim is to build a new generation of concert audiences. It also organises international exchange programmes to foster sharing of music among local young musicians and their counterparts around the world. In 2009, it provided music training to a total of 8 300 trainees under its three training programmes and its music promotional activities attracted 160 500 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 between 303 and 496 people. In 2009, more than 682 000 people attended 745 performances in these theatres.

Hong Kong City Hall

Opened in 1962, Hong Kong City Hall, is a major civic centre comprising a 1 434-seat concert hall, a 463-seat theatre, and an exhibition hall. The City Hall complex was graded as a Grade I Historic Building by the Antiquities Advisory Board in December 2009. A total of 638 events were held in the concert hall and the theatre during the year, attracting over 390 000 people.

Regional and District Civic Centres

The LCSD runs 11 regional and district civic centres: 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

The Venue Partnership Scheme was launched in April 2009 based on recommendations contained in a report published in 2006 by the Committee on Performing Arts. It aims to foster a partnership between venues and performing arts groups, its prime objectives being building the image and character of individual venues and their partners, enlarging the audience base, optimising use of space and facilities at 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 this three-year scheme, 20 venue partners are engaged in organising a variety of performing arts activities at 11 venues. Support for the venue partners includes priority use of venues to facilitate advance programme planning and provision of additional funding for organising programmes and activities, staff and administrative costs.

Some 330 stage performances and 247 educational, promotion and audience building activities were organised by the venue partners in 2009 with a total audience attendance of 289 000.

Indoor Stadia

Opened in 1980 and 1983 respectively, the 3 500-seat Queen Elizabeth Stadium and the Hong Kong Coliseum, which seats 12 500, 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 to international and local activities, ranging from cultural and entertainment to sporting and celebratory events.

A total of 52 and 130 events were staged in the Coliseum and the Stadium, attracting over 1 216 100 and 430 600 spectators respectively.

In December, the stadium and coliseum were two of the competition venues for Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games (EAG) events. The coliseum was also the site for the spectacular closing ceremony of the Games on December 13.

West Kowloon Cultural District

The West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) is a strategic investment by the Government to meet the long-term infrastructure needs of the arts and cultural sector, which plays a vital part of any world-class city's economic and social fabric. The WKCD will provide quality culture, entertainment and tourism programmes that will appeal to both residents and visitors from around the world. When completed, it will comprise 15 performing arts venues, a cultural institution focused on 20th-21st century visual culture and an Exhibition Centre.

The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (the Authority) was established in July 2008. A one-off endowment of \$21.6 billion to meet the capital costs of the WKCD project was approved by the Legislative Council in July 2008. The Board of the Authority, underpinned by six committees, has taken forward the planning for the WKCD's development. In February 2009, the Authority appointed 21 members to its Consultation Panel to gather public views on matters relating to the functions of the Authority.

In preparing the development plan, the Authority has undertaken a three-stage public engagement exercise to gauge public views. The three-month long first stage of the exercise was launched in early October 2009 to gauge the community's aspirations for and expectations of the WKCD as a whole, and the views of the arts and cultural stakeholders on the requirements of the facilities in the arts and cultural venues.

URBTIX

URBTIX (Urban Ticketing System) commenced operation in 1984 and has become the most widely-used computerised ticketing system in Hong Kong. It offers patrons a range of convenient and reliable ticketing services through its network of 39 outlets as well as internet and telephone booking services. In 2009, over \$638 million was paid through URBTIX for some 4.02 million tickets for over 6 800 performances.

Cultural Presentations

LCSD Cultural Presentations

The LCSD provides quality cultural programmes on a year-round basis. In 2009, a total of 925 performances featured local and visiting artists in a variety of cultural programmes appealing to audiences of all ages. They were attended by more than 451 000 people.

To celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China, the LCSD presented a Cantonese Operatic Songs Gala Concert featuring special guest star Lam Kar-sing and more than 20 master artistes from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. The year also marked the 20th Anniversary of the Hong

Kong Cultural Centre and the 10th Anniversary of the Kwai Tsing Theatre. Highlights of the celebratory programmes at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre included concerts by Yo-Yo Ma and John Williams, who appeared in the opening festival of the centre 20 years ago, Gidon Kremer and Kremerata Blatica, performances by local artists and arts groups including Mozart's *Magic Flute* produced by Opera Hong Kong, *Piano Pals Singing Happy Birthday* by Gabriel Kwok, Nancy Loo, Eva Lue and Tam Ka-kit, the four artists gathering again after 20 years to celebrate the centre's birthday, *The Exquisite Charm of Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera* by Tang Yuen-ha and *Diary VI - Applause...* by dance artist Mui Cheuk-yin. Programmes to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of Kwai Tsing Theatre included performances by the National Dance Company of Korea and the Edward Lam Dance Theatre, as well as *Excerpts of Cantonese Operas by Tong Tik-sang* performed by Cantonese opera stars.

An array of cultural and ethnic programmes was also organised in support of the Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games (EAG) with performances by artists from the countries and regions participating in the Games, including Ondekoza from Japan, U-Theatre from Taiwan and Tian Haojiang in Guo Wenjing's opera *Poet Li Bai*. Other highlights included an EAG Cultural Extravaganza and a local theatre series, 'Passion of Body Art'. There were also large-scale free outdoor events including a Cantonese Opera Day and a Dance Day.

The LCSD supports local artists including small and medium art groups in showcasing their talent in a variety of presentations under different themes. Local artists showed their vitality and creativity in many events throughout the year.

In 2009, for its cultural programmes the LCSD continued to explore the use of independent performance venues in addition to those under its management. These included Nan Lian Garden, Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity, the Jockey Club Creative Arts Centre in Shek Kip Mei, Cattle Depot, the Jockey Club Auditorium at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts. Thematic programmes were devised to enhance the identity and image of these performance spaces, thus attracting audience to visit.

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

In 2009 the department continued its collaboration with consulates-general and foreign cultural institutions in sponsoring cultural exchanges.

Entertainment Programmes

During the year, 640 carnivals and free district entertainment programmes covering a variety of performing arts were organised by the LCSD and attracted more than 1 014 000 spectators.

Outdoor extravaganzas included Lunar New Year and Mid-Autumn lantern carnivals, featuring ethnic song and dance performances by arts groups from Zhejiang and Yunnan, and a New Year's Eve Countdown Carnival. For the first time,

a series of Community Thematic Carnivals was launched in Tseung Kwan O, Sham Shui Po and Tung Chung with stage performances and participatory activities tailor-made for the community. To enhance cultural exchanges between the local and Asian communities in Hong Kong, the LCSD once again organised events such as 'Concert in the Park' featuring Filipino artists presented in collaboration with the Consulate-General of the Philippines, and the 'Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances' with flavours of nine countries and cities participating in the Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games.

Arts Education and Audience-building Projects

During the year, the LCSD organised 1 143 arts education and audience-building activities. These included territory-wide schemes implemented at school and community levels namely Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme, District Cantonese Opera Parade, School Culture Day Scheme, School Arts Amateur Scheme and Arts Experience Scheme for Senior Secondary Students. Two new initiatives were unveiled in 2009 — the first offering the opportunity for students to perform publicly in the neighbourhood of their schools at the premises of voluntary agencies while the second was 'Let's Enjoy Cantonese Opera in a Bamboo Theatre', a project organised in partnership with various district organisations featuring Cantonese opera performances and interactive educational activities designed for the participation of children.

Major Cultural Events

Hong Kong Arts Festival

Held annually in February and March, the Hong Kong Arts Festival is one of Asia's most prestigious international festivals. In 2009 it presented 126 performances, including four free outdoor performances, and attracted a total audience of over 117 000, among them 12 400 under the Young Friends of the Festival scheme. Box office receipts amounted to \$32 million representing sales of 94 per cent of available tickets.

Highlights of the festival included the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bernard Haitink, The Berlin Symphony Orchestra under Ingo Metzmacher, the Latvian National Opera's productions of Handel's *Alcina* and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* by Shostakovich, the Shanghai Yueju Opera Theatre, the Beijing Opera All-stars, the National Ballet of China in *The Peony Pavilion*, the English National Ballet's *Alice in Wonderland*, the Theatre Royal Bath's production of Shaw's *Pygmalion* directed by Peter Hall, *Metamorphosis* adapted and directed by David Farr and Gisli Orn Gardarsson, *In-I*: co-directed and performed by Juliette Binoche and Akram Khan, The Wooster Group's *The Emperor Jones*, and the Festival's own production of *Murder in San Jose* directed by veteran local dramatist Lee Chun-chow.

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. To celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the

Founding of the People's Republic of China, this year's carnival featured two programmes from the Mainland opening with *Genghis Khan* by the Inner Mongolia Acrobatic Troupe of China, an acrobatic spectacular which blended traditional Mongolian feats with breathtaking acrobatic stunts, and *The Carnival of Chinese Puppets*, featuring three renowned Chinese puppet troupes. A total of 11 visiting performing groups and 29 local troupes participated in the carnival with programmes ranging from street dance performances, mask theatre, Chinese and Western music, multi-media and juggling to children's films. In addition to stage performances, the carnival featured many interactive programmes and activities including school tours, exhibitions, workshops and museum and library presentations. Some 132 500 people attended the carnival's 413 events.

Silk Road Arts Festival

The Silk Road Arts Festival was the third edition of the World's Cultures festival series that featured leading arts groups mainly from countries along the ancient Silk Road and creations inspired by it, offering a colourful array of performances that weaved together contemporary elements and traditional folk culture. The festival opened with *Splendours of the Tang Dynasty* by the Shaanxi Provincial Song and Dance Theatre. Other programme highlights included exotic concerts from Central and South Asia and the Middle East; Silk Road-themed New Age music by celebrated Japanese musician Kitaro; spectacular dance performances by the Georgian National Dance Company Sukhishvili and Shen Wei Dance Arts; a commissioned programme, *Marco Polo's Travel to China* by the En Chordais Ensemble; performances in different art forms by local arts groups as well as the closing programme, *Buddhist Music — Treasures from the Silk Road* by three renowned Buddhist music ensembles from the Mainland. Extension activities, including exhibitions, workshops, talks, school tours, student shows, foyer and outdoor performances, were presented not only at the LCSD's performance venues but also at university theatres, shopping malls, coffee shops and libraries.

A total of 35 visiting and 45 local arts groups performed in over 150 events during the five-week festival from October 9 to November 8 with a total attendance of more than 170 000.

Heritage

Lord Wilson Heritage Trust

The Lord Wilson Heritage Trust was established in 1992 to promote the preservation and conservation of Hong Kong's heritage by means of funding to support community organisations and individuals undertaking heritage related activities and research projects.

During 2009, the trust granted around \$1.8 million to support 11 heritage-related projects.

Museums

Hong Kong Museum of Art

In 2009, the Hong Kong Museum of Art jointly presented major exhibitions, including 'Louis Vuitton: A Passion for Creation' in collaboration with Louis Vuitton and the Fondation Louis Vuitton pour la Création, and 'The Prosperous Cities', a selection of paintings from the Liaoning Provincial Museum mounted jointly with that museum. The former illustrated the foundation's art collection and the creative process of design through installations, combining works of art and archive documents, while the latter showed the exquisite art collection of the Liaoning Provincial Museum including works renowned in Chinese art history, including *Along the River during the Qingming Festival* by Qiu Ying and *Prosperous Suzhou* by Xu Yang.

Other themed exhibitions held during the year, including 'No Frontiers: The Art of Ding Yang', 'Homage to Ha Bik-chuen: Art of an Eternal Spring' and 'Hong Kong Art: Open Dialogue', and exhibition curated by guest curators that featured works of local artists including the younger generation of contemporary Hong Kong artists. The 'Hong Kong Contemporary Art Biennial Awards 2009' provided a platform for works by potential artists to encourage artistic creation in Hong Kong.

Other exhibitions included 'The Ultimate South China Travel Guide Canton', 'New Literati Painting' and 'Glittering Beauty: Chinese Accessories from the Hong Kong Museum of Art', which highlighted the artefacts from the museum's collection including the permanent exhibitions, the museum recorded 332 198 visitors in 2009.

The museum organised and frequently participated in many educational activities. Some of these were co-organised with other government departments, NGOs, cultural organisations and art groups to promote the visual arts and encourage art education among diverse groups in society. Activities included 'Summer Art Cadets 2009 Discovery Trip', 'International Museum Day 2009', School Culture Day Scheme and a wide range of in-house programmes. Pilot programmes to coincide with the New Senior Secondary School Curriculum were held with an encouraging response from schools.

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 2009 included 'The Artistry of Yixing Pottery: The K S Lo Collection of the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware' and a travelling exhibition to take part in an international event in Belgium, 'Europalia China 2009'. This introduced Chinese tea culture to European audiences, featuring selected artefacts from The K S Lo Collection. A competition under the title '2010 Tea Ware by Hong Kong Potters' was launched in 2009 with a call for entry submissions in November. Winning and merited works will be showcased in an associated exhibition, allowing members of the public to appreciate the work of local potters. The Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware recorded 168 211 visitors in 2009.

Hong Kong Museum of History

In addition to the permanent exhibition, 'The Hong Kong Story', the Hong Kong Museum of History held a number of themed exhibitions including 'Modern Metropolis: Material Culture of Shanghai and Hong Kong' and 'A Century of China' that were organised in collaboration with Mainland museums to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China. These aimed to facilitate academic and cultural inter-flow between Hong Kong and the Mainland. The museum also mounted exhibitions on the history of Hong Kong and South China, which included 'City of Victoria', a selection of the Museum's historical photographs, 'Traditional Festivals in Hong Kong' and 'Pioneer Archaeologist in South China' featuring Father Maglioni's collection of archaeological finds. More than 685 000 people visited the museum during 2009.

The Hong Kong Museum of History also manages five branch museums — the Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence, Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum, the Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery, the Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum and the 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 two thematic shows during the year: 'History of Island East' and 'People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison'. Some 129 000 people visited the museum during the year.

The Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum housed in historic Kom Tong Hall contains exhibits relating to Dr Sun's life and career. In addition to the two permanent exhibitions, there were three thematic exhibitions, '1911 Revolution in China' featuring the photographs of Francis Stafford, 'A Sketch of Soong Ching Ling and Her Artefacts' and 'Icon of an Era - the Dr Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum 1929.6.1'. Some 109 000 people visited the museum during the year.

The Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery, situated at Quarry Bay Park, is centred around the decommissioned fireboat and features an exhibition on the history of fireboats and sea rescue. During 2009 it attracted more than 115 000 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 34 000 and 15 000 visitors respectively.

Hong Kong Heritage Museum

To coincide with 'Le French May 2009' and its themes of the year 'A Salute to Masters', the Hong Kong Heritage Museum presented the Victoria and Albert Museum's exhibition 'The Golden Age of Couture: Paris and London 1947-1957' featuring post-war couture during a decade described by Christian Dior as the 'Golden Age' of fashion. Le French May is a French arts festival held in Hong Kong annually, organised by the Consulate General of France in collaboration with the Alliance Francaise with the support of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

The festival covers a broad array of artistic disciplines like visual arts, opera, classical and contemporary music, dance, new circus and cinema. Under the theme of 'A Salute to Masters', the museum also presented 'The Verve of Light and Shadow', which featured the pictorial works of the Master Photographers Tchan Fou-li, Kan Hing-fook and Leo K K Wong. The 'Splendour of Cantonese Opera' which reviewed the achievements and contributions of Masters Tong Tik Sang and Yam Kim Fai to the art of Cantonese opera; and 'The Enchanting Brush', a selection of paintings and calligraphy by the Lingnan master Chao Shao-an. A generous donation from the family of the late Lydia Sum, made possible an exhibition entitled 'Our Beloved 'Happy Fruit' Lydia Sum' reviewing the television star's career and the relationship of her iconic images with the broader historical and cultural context of Hong Kong.

In August 2009, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology was commissioned to conduct a territory-wide survey of Hong Kong's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) with a view to compiling an inventory of it. In September, four applications were submitted to the Central People's Government Ministry of Culture for the inclusion in the third national list of ICH in China of the Jiao-festival of Cheung Chau, the Tai O dragon boat water parade, the Tai Hang fire dragon dance, and the Hong Kong Chiu Chow Community's Yu Lan Ghost Festival. Also in September, an application to place Cantonese opera on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity was successful, making it Hong Kong's first entry in the List. In addition to public programmes to promote ICH, a three-day international conference was held in December for experts and researchers to exchange experience in the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage of the mainland of China, Hong Kong and the East Asian region.

The museum offered a variety of public educational and extension programmes throughout the year. These included workshops, demonstrations, training programmes for young people, guided tours, talks and bilingual fun tours for children. The museum also co-ordinated a two-day 'International Museum Day 2009, Hong Kong' in May to reach out to and engage different audiences. A car parade entitled 'Museums On the Go' saw a fleet of decorated vehicles tour the territory to introduce the public to the eclectic mix of activities and services offered by the museums of Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Heritage Museum also manages three branch museums.

The first of these, 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 Sai Kung Country Park is housed in a Hakka village, which was built in the late 19th century and 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 Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Sam Tung Uk Museum, Hong Kong Railway Museum and Sheung Yiu Folk Museum attracted 437 411, 120 287, 224 351, and 57 692 visitors respectively during the year.

Hong Kong Science Museum

To celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China, the Hong Kong Science Museum presented 'Biodiversity in China', an exhibition on China's wildlife, providing visitors with a glimpse of China's rich biodiversity and the importance of conservation of natural habitats. A 'Candy Unwrapped' exhibition organised during the summer holidays introduced to visitors the surprising biology, chemistry, physiology and psychology behind the world of candy.

Other major exhibitions during the year included 'Exploration of Time' and 'Polar Crisis — Global Warming'. The former illustrated various concepts of time while the latter elucidated the changes occurring at the polar regions and looked into the global problem of climate change.

The Science Museum also organised a number of public activities for the visit of the *Yuanwang-6* Space Tracking Ship to Hong Kong. These included guided tours of the ship, an exhibition explaining its mission and a public lecture by the experts and crew of the ship. The activities attracted 13 600 visitors.

The museum's Science News Corner staged two thematic exhibitions: 'Science of Human Locomotion' and 'Bio-hydrogen Production from Wastewater'. These were organised jointly with The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and The University of Hong Kong to introduce their research achievements. These exhibitions together with the permanent displays attracted more than 995 000 visitors.

Five leading scientists, Professor Ai Guoxiang, Professor Zhang Yanzhong, Professor Sun Zezhou, Professor Tony F Chan and Professor Yuen Kwok-yung from the Mainland and Hong Kong delivered lectures at the 'Distinguished Chinese Scientists Lecture Series 2009', 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 included public health, lunar exploration, aviation technology, satellite navigation systems and applications in mathematics.

'Hong Kong Geology 360', jointly presented by the Department of Earth Sciences and the Stephen Hui Geological Museum of The University of Hong Kong, the Geotechnical Engineering Office of the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Geological Society of Hong Kong and the Science Museum, promoted public's understanding of the local geological environment and awareness of the need to preserve the geological heritage through a series of lectures, field visits and a special exhibition on local geology running from May to the end of the year.

'Science Alive 2009', sponsored by the Croucher Foundation and jointly presented with the British Council and the Education Bureau, offered a variety of

educational activities including contests, lecture series, workshops, demonstrations and science walkabouts. A highlight of the year was 'FameLab', a science communication contest, the winner of which would represent Hong Kong in the FameLab International finals in the United Kingdom. FameLab was set up in 2004 and was introduced to Hong Kong by the British Council, a working partner of the Science Alive 2009, to attract members of the public who can present scientific principles effectively and interestingly within three minutes.

During the year, the museum worked with academic institutions, professional bodies and government departments on a number of special programmes. These included a Fun Science competition, a Primary Science Project exhibition, a Hong Kong Student Science Project competition, a Secondary School Science Quiz Robotic Olympiad, and a Science in the Public Service campaign.

Hong Kong Space Museum

The Stanley Ho Space Theatre reopened on July 1, 2009 following refurbishment that included installation of a new digital planetarium system and seats with an interactive multi-language system. Visitors may take part in multi-user games or use the interactive system installed in the armrest of every seat, to select the course of action they would like the show to progress. The show will then take the path selected by the majority of players.

More than 563 000 people visited the museum's exhibitions and shows in the Space Theatre while 21 000 people attended the educational and extension programmes in 2009.

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 9 000 films and 1 000 000 related materials, mainly through donations and deposits. The major donations in 2009 included over 95 films produced in 1980s to 2000s together with over 3 000 items of film related material from Dream Movies Entertainment Overseas Limited. Major events during 2009 included the exhibitions on Lin Dai Collection and Qi Xiao Fu 50th Anniversary.

Art Promotion Office

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

Works arising from Public Art Scheme 2006 were displayed at Ko Shan Road Park, Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre and Po Hong Kong Park in early 2009. The 'Oasis • Mirage: Hong Kong International Sculpture Symposium 2009' in partnership with Hong Kong Sculpture Society was held at the West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade in March–April 2009. This symposium was the first of its kind in form and scale in Hong Kong, inviting visitors to share the joy of artistic creation,

the sculptors creating their works step by step as visitors watched. In addition, the 'Sai Kung District Council Public Art Project 2009' was launched in May to commission four artworks in Man Yee Playground in Sai Kung, Po Tsui Park and Po Kong Park in Tseung Kwan O. The preliminary proposals were short-listed in July for an exhibition to be organised in the Sai Kung District in 2010. The 'Artist in the Neighbourhood Scheme' entered its fourth round with a series of travelling exhibitions. The opening exhibition and seven solo exhibitions of enlisted artists took place in 2009.

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 2009-10 was recognised with a graduation exhibition scheduled for January 2010. The centre also arranged a series of New Media Art workshops, and video screenings of works by contemporary artists to support and promote the development of art in Hong Kong. A series of Chinese culture, painting and calligraphy workshops and lectures was organised to promote Chinese arts.

Central Conservation Section

The Central Conservation Section's role is to look after and preserve the public museum collections for present and future generations. It has facilities for maintaining and treating more than 560 cultural objects, including paintings, documents, prints, textiles, metals, ceramics, organic materials and archaeological finds.

In pursuit of its educational role, the section organised 23 workshops, behind-the-scenes laboratory tours, thematic talks, and school visits for secondary students and other interested parties, attracting a total of 1 680 participants. The section also strives to engage the community through its Conservation Volunteer Programme and registered a total of 1 200 hours of service by the Conservation Volunteers during the year.

The successful launching of a web-based museum object conservation system has enabled treatment records to be accessed and shared by conservators and museum curators as an integral part of the museum's collection management process.

The Central Conservation Section was also represented at the first International Seminar on Conservation of Historical Paintings held at the Guangzhou Academy of Arts, during which it presented a paper entitled 'Conservation of China Trade Oil Paintings' .

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 10.82 million books and 1.64 million multimedia materials. They serve 3.78 million registered subscribers who borrowed more than 61.66 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 2.4 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 have worked continuously to improve their service by extending opening hours, increasing the book stock, enhancing the reference and information services, capitalising on the use of information technology and promoting a reading culture. From April, all 33 major and district libraries extended their weekly opening hours from 61 or 62 hours to 71 hours. The pattern of the opening hours was aligned to provide service seven days a week. The libraries now open at 9 am every morning except for Monday or Thursday, when they open at 12 noon, and operate until 8 pm on weekdays and Saturdays.

Throughout the year, the public libraries worked closely with District Councils and local organisations to promote and develop further Libraries@neighbourhood, a partnership scheme involving both the community and the libraries. Participating organisations are offered a block loan of library materials and professional advice to set up community libraries that meet the needs of their target clients. By the end of 2009, there were 122 community libraries in operation throughout Hong Kong.

The public libraries work with the Education Bureau to promote a scheme providing library cards to encourage primary school students to use the library services. Course materials from the Open University of Hong Kong are available in 16 public libraries for students' easy accessibility in 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 and Fitness Collection for lending and public reference. In October 2009, the Hong Kong Oral History Special Collection was launched at Hong Kong Central Library. This was set up by the Hong Kong Oral History Repository Project initiated by the Home Affairs Bureau and with the support of nine local tertiary institutes as founding partners. It aims to provide reference material on oral histories on topics of Hong Kong studies and related research outputs as well as a thematic website for public reference.

Web-based reference services form an integral part of the reference and information services. They cover a wide range of online databases, electronic books, web resource guides and topical resource guides available on the library's website.

Information Technology Initiatives and Digital Library Initiatives

The HKPL's Library Automation system is one of the largest computerised installations of its kind in the world. It provides 24-hour internet library services, including online catalogue searching and the reservation and renewal of library material. In 2009, more than 19.03 million online renewal transactions were processed through the Internet and Telephone Renewal Services.

The HKPL is actively planning to replace the current system over the coming years and it will also carry out a pilot test on the use of Radio Frequency Identification technology to enhance its services. The HKPL continued to expand the application of information technology and installed over 80 number of new Internet Express Terminals with motorised height adjustment feature in libraries during the year.

In 2009, over 770 000 readers were registered to use their smart ID cards as library cards. Over 1 700 computer workstations in the libraries were connected to the Internet for public use.

The HKPL's Multimedia Information System (MMIS) provides a powerful one-stop search facility enabling users to explore multimedia archives and digitised documents via the Internet at home or through some 600 workstations in 27 public libraries. To continue to provide users with an effective and versatile multimedia information service, the HKPL is undertaking a major upgrade of the system.

Outreach Programmes and Promotion of Reading and Literary Arts

Outreach programmes form an integral part of the library services. In 2009, the HKPL organised 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 19 770 library outreach programmes were conducted in 2009. 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, a series of Meet-the-Author sessions, Hong Kong Public Libraries Reading Clubs for Teens and Families and the Hong Kong Book Prize.

Creative competitions under the title 'China Today' were held to celebrate the '4.23 World Book Day' and the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China. Another programme marking the celebration was a series of lectures under the title 'China Today'.

A roving exhibition and book display were mounted to mark the launching of the 2009 East Asian Games in Hong Kong.

During 2009, HKPL continued its series of special programmes and competitions to promote creative writing and appreciation of literature. These included the 10th Hong Kong Biennial Awards for Chinese Literature, a Chinese Poetry Writing Competition and another competition involving story writing in Chinese. It also joined other organisations in holding territory-wide reading sessions for the general public.

Cultural Exchange

In 2009, Hong Kong's public libraries co-operated and strengthened ties with their counterparts elsewhere, in exchanging library news and matters of mutual interest. An exhibition, 'Contemporary Picture Book Illustration in Germany', was jointly organised with the Goethe-Institute in Hong Kong to introduce the work of 13 leading German illustrators. The HKPL and Shenzhen Library also held creative writing competitions to celebrate '4.23 World Book Day' in which Shenzhen's winning entries were displayed alongside those of Hong Kong.

Books Registration Office

The Books Registration Office helps preserve Hong Kong's literary heritage by registering local publications and administering the application of International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and monitor its use under the 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 2009, the office registered 13 283 books, 12 525 periodicals, and issued 11 510 ISBNs for 845 publishers.

Sports and Recreation

Hong Kong people are increasingly taking up sports 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 provides subventions to 25 holiday camps and sea activity centres run by 12 non-governmental organisations. Some 752 300 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 2009 the LCSD processed 73 applications for billiard establishments, nine for public bowling alleys and seven for public 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, 14 sports were covered by the Elite Training Programme — athletics, badminton, billiards, cycling, fencing, karatedo, 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 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games and planning for the redevelopment of the Institute.

Sporting Achievements

Hong Kong athletes achieved outstanding results in various international and regional sporting events in 2009, winning a total of 268 gold, 293 silver and 387 bronze medals¹. At the Tokyo 2009 Asian Youth Para Games, the Hong Kong delegation brought back 19 gold, 12 silver and 16 bronze medals. Local athletes also registered a record medal tally of 26 gold, 31 silver and 53 bronze medals at the Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games.

Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China

The Amateur Sports Federation and Olympic Committee 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.

¹ The information regarding the number of medals is provided by Hong Kong Sports Institute, Sports 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 2009.

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 2008 was held in conjunction with the federation's annual spring dinner in February. Athlete So Wa Wai was awarded the most coveted Bank of China (Hong Kong) Best of Best Hong Kong Sports Star Award.

Hong Kong sports established a new milestone in 2009 with the successful staging of the 5th East Asian Games, an international multi-sports event held in Hong Kong for the first time. More than 2 100 athletes competed in 22 sports at the event. International Olympic President, Count Jacques Rogge, and other world celebrities attended the spectacular opening ceremony held on the Kowloon waterfront facing picturesque Victoria Harbour. State Councillor, Madam Liu Yandong formally opened the Games. The Hong Kong, China delegation, headed by Mr Timothy Fok, President of the Federation, Mr Pang Chung, Honorary Secretary General and Ms Vivien Lau, Chef de Mission, won 110 medals, the largest number ever garnered by Hong Kong at any event.

Hong Kong Paralympic Committee and Sports Association for the Physically Disabled

The year 2009 will be remembered with mixed emotions.

It saw the sad loss of Professor Sir Harry Fang Sin-yang, the beloved President of the Hong Kong Paralympic Committee and Sports Association for the Physically Disabled, who passed away on August 24, 2009 after a long illness.

Professor Fang was known widely for his contributions to the welfare of Hong Kong people and, in particular, to sports for people with disabilities in Hong Kong, the Mainland and around the world. He will be sorely missed.

On the brighter side, Hong Kong's athletes resumed their vigorous training soon after the Beijing Paralympic Games and have been participating in international competitions. Some 200 athletes took part in 25 international competitions in

different sports and won 160 medals. They were outstanding in table tennis, archery, wheelchair tennis and badminton.

The wheelchair fencing team also impressed in a series of World Cup competitions, while 28 young athletes from special schools represented Hong Kong with distinction at the Pacific Schools Meet in Canberra and the 2009 Para Youth Games in Tokyo.

Another high point was the 3rd Asia and South Pacific Boccia Championships 2009, a pre-Paralympic qualifying competition for the 2012 London Paralympic Games, which was organised successfully by the association despite the tight time-frame of less than nine months.

The association was bestowed with a 'Leader of the Year' award by the Sing Tao News Corporation Limited for its sterling work.

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 which had an attendance rate of 35 000 in 2009. Over the years, the association had been steadily developing a training programme to cater for 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 5th Daegu University President's Cup International Adaptive Indoor Rowing Competition in Korea at which Hong Kong won two gold and two silver medals; the 2nd INAS-FID Global Games in Czech Republic at which Hong Kong won 10 gold, 10 silver and eight bronze medals; the FISA World Rowing Championships in Poland at which Hong Kong won one gold medal; the Tokyo 2009 Asian Youth Para Games in Japan at which Hong Kong won seven gold, eight silver and 12 bronze medals; the 1st INAS-FID World Indoor Rowing Championships in Hong Kong at which Hong Kong won two gold, three silver and two bronze medals; the 2009 IPC Swimming European Championships in Iceland at which Hong Kong won two silver and one bronze medals.

Hong Kong athletes also achieved excellent results at the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games in America, the 2009 Special Olympics East Asia Regional Bocce Competition in Korea, the 2009 Special Olympics International Golf Tournament in Chinese Taipei and the 2009 Special Olympics East Asia Regional Football Competition in China. A total of 129 medals, comprising 38 gold, 45 silver and 46 bronze was won by the intellectually disabled athletes during the year.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club

Founded in 1884 and marking its 125th Anniversary this season, The Hong Kong Jockey Club has become one of the world's largest and most respected racing

organisations. The club 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. It also operates the Mark Six lottery and offers betting on overseas football matches.

The club is Hong Kong's largest single taxpayer, contributing \$12.98 billion to the public purse in 2008-09, or about 6.8 per cent of all taxes collected during the year. It is also one of the city's largest employers, with more than 26 000 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 2008-09 it donated more than \$1.37 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. Since implementation of a betting duty reform package in 2006 and the addition of five more local race days and 15 simulcast days for 2009-10 season, the club has achieved some success in regaining revenue from illegal and offshore bookmakers, but this remains a matter of concern. Discussions are now under way on further measures to maintain the club's competitiveness in the light of the growing number of alternative gambling opportunities in the region.

The club has long supported sports development in Hong Kong. In late 2008, it committed funding of \$50 million to support the Hong Kong Jockey Club Equestrian Team and a new junior team for the next four years. This support bore fruit in the 11th National Games in October 2009 when Hong Kong's riders, comprising four members of the Hong Kong Jockey Club equestrian teams, claimed a team bronze medal and an individual gold and bronze in the Games.

The club also played a role in Hong Kong's successful staging of the 2009 East Asian Games, committing funding of \$40 million to cover training and support for a volunteer programme, the construction of The Hong Kong Jockey Club International BMX Park in Kwai Chung as one of the competition venues and a subsidy scheme for student tickets.

The club has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Guangzhou Asian Games Organising Committee and the Guangzhou Municipal Government on the Asian Games Equestrian Events Venue Construction, Technical Support and Post-Asian Games Utilisation. This joint venture will not only enhance the two cities' experience of staging large-scale events but also provide the club with the necessary horse training facilities after the Games to ensure its sustainable development.

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. The 2009 International Races attracted 31 top thoroughbreds from eight countries, with Hong Kong-trained horses taking the honours in two of

the four races — Good Ba Ba winning the Hong Kong Mile for the third time in a row and Sacred Kingdom claiming the Sprint title again after its first victory in 2007.

Recreational and Sports Programmes

In 2009, the LCSD organised some 35 800 recreational and sports programmes for about 2.17 million participants of all ages and abilities at a total cost of \$128.6 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 fencing teams in 18 districts. About 12 870 young people took part in 270 events organised in 2009.

'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, private residential club houses, schools, youth and elderly centres, LCSD sports centres, libraries, holidays camps and parks 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 84 000 people took part in some 1 400 programmes of this kind.

Young Athletes Training Scheme

In 2009, the LCSD commissioned 20 NSAs to provide intermediate level training in 23 sports disciplines for teenagers wishing to become athletes under the Young Athletes Training Scheme. Some 28 070 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 sport in schools, progressive training is provided for students showing potential. The scheme comprises seven subsidiary programmes: a 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 2009, more than 7 700 sporting events were organised for over 600 000 students.

Community Sports Club Project

The Community Sports Club (CSC) Project is organised by the LCSD in collaboration with the NSAs. In 2009, the LCSD provided support to about 370 CSCs to organise 2 000 sports training activities for 44 100 participants. Seminars and management development programmes were organised for some 640 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 for activities for local people. A total of 224 sports training classes were held for 2 312 participants under the CSC Enhancement Programme. The CSCs were also encouraged to organise more interclub competitions to raise sport standards at the community level.

Sports Subvention Scheme

The LCSD is responsible for providing subvention to the NSAs and other sporting organisations for sports promotion and development. 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 by the LCSD with funds amounting to about \$186 million. 10 384 programmes for different sports were organised by the NSAs and other organisations, attracting 711 108 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 2009, the NSAs were given subsidies under the scheme to stage international events in Hong Kong. These included the Tennis Champions Challenge, the 2009 Hong Kong ITU Triathlon Premium Asian Cup (Triathlon), the Hong Kong International Judo Tournament 2009, the FINA Marathon Swimming World Cup — Hong Kong, the 2009 ITTF Junior Circuit — 1st Hong Kong Junior Open (Table Tennis), the Hong Kong International Bowls Classic 2009, the 14th Asian Cities Gold Cup Taekwondo Championships and the 10th Asian Indoor Cycling Championships cum Hong Kong Open.

'M' Mark Support Package

The 'M' Mark Support Package was launched in November 2004 by the Sports Commission's Major Sports Events Committee to seek greater support from the commercial sector and the community for the NSAs in developing 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 Sport Development Fund. In 2009, eight events were given 'M' Mark status and/or support packages.

The 2nd Hong Kong Games

The 2nd Hong Kong Games was held from May 9 to 31. A total of 2 307 athletes from the 18 districts participated in six sport competitions, athletics, badminton, basketball, table tennis, swimming and tennis. To encourage public support and participation in the Games, a series of 13 publicity and public participation activities were held that attracted over 160 000.

Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games

The 5th East Asian Games (EAG) was held in Hong Kong from December 5 to 13, 2009 for the first time. It was also the first time that the city played host to an

international multi-sport event in which more than 2 100 athletes took part, competing in 22 sports.

The participating countries and regions were China, Korea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Macao, Mongolia, Chinese Taipei, Guam and the host, Hong Kong.

A floating stage, erected off the Tsim Sha Tsui waterfront with picturesque Victoria Harbour as a backdrop, was the centrepiece of the spectacular opening ceremony.

All of the top athletes performed brilliantly befitting their status. A total of 58 Games records were broken. A series of night shows was held as part of the event, highlighting the culture of the countries and regions participating in the Games.

Besides competitive sports, the EAG provided an opportunity for the participants to learn more about each other's culture and to strengthen friendship and solidarity.

Hong Kong athletes fared exceptionally well, reflecting their years of strict training and commitment. They were roundly cheered by the home crowd who contributed in no small measure to their winning 110 medals (26 gold, 31 silver and 53 bronze) and breaking 18 Hong Kong records.

One of the star performers was Hong Kong's football team which beat strong squads from across the region to win gold. More than 30 000 local supporters turned up to cheer them at the Hong Kong Stadium.

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

The 11th National Games of the People's Republic of China was held in Shandong Province in October 2009. Held every four years, the National Games is the highest level multi-sport event in the country and this was the fourth time the HKSAR participated. Hong Kong sent about 230 athletes and 110 officials, the largest ever delegation, to compete in the finals of 25 competition events. Hong Kong competitors in cycling, equestrian and triathlon events won a total of seven medals, two gold, one silver and four bronze, the highest number of medals Hong Kong had ever scored at the National Games.

2009 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 18 to May 3. The carnival was given extensive coverage by the local and international news media. More than 6 000 people took part in the competitions and other activities, the highlight of which was the bun scrambling competition in which participants vied with each other to retrieve buns from the exterior of the 14-metre high bun towers.

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, large-scale community events and variety shows. More than 439 000 people attended 42 events at the venue in 2009.

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 2009, 119 255 people participated in events at the water sports centres and 430 597 people visited or stayed at the holiday camps.

Other Sports and Recreational Venues

The LCSD manages 89 sports centres, 37 swimming pool complexes, 260 tennis courts, 290 squash courts, 25 sports grounds, four golf driving ranges and two public riding schools.

Eight major new recreation and sports projects were completed in 2009. These are the Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground, open space sites in Wah Fu, Ap Lei Chau, Siu Sai Wan, Yau Tsim Mong, Kwai Chung, and Tuen Mun, and an indoor recreation centre and community hall-cum-library in Tung Chung. Works on 18 other major projects throughout Hong Kong are underway.

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 2009, 10.29 million people used the beaches and 8.91 million visited public swimming pools. Shark prevention nets have been installed for the safety of swimmers. Lifeguard services are provided during the swimming season. Lifeguards are also on duty during the winter at the four most popular beaches, Clear Water Bay Second Beach, Golden Beach, Silverstrand and Deep Water Bay,.

Parks Managed by LCSD

The LCSD manages 1 514 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. They were developed between 1861 and 1871. Albany Road runs through the eastern garden, which is home to an extensive collection of birds, while the western garden, opened

in 1871, houses mammalian and reptilian exhibits. The botanical section is largely in the eastern garden.

Despite the urban surroundings, the gardens provide a viable conservation centre for endangered species. Fourteen endangered species of mammals, birds and reptiles lived there in 2009. The bird collection is one of the most comprehensive in Asia, comprising about 380 birds of 130 species. Fifteen of these species have reared offspring. The mammal collection consists of 70 animals of 17 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 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, a 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 80 different species are kept, including hornbills and pelicans. Some bird species, notably the Java Sparrow, 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 occupies the second floor of the sports centre, which has been opened to the public since October 2005. The exhibits gallery tells the story of the Olympic movement from its beginnings 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 Hong Kong 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 operates a 34.5-metre sailing junk, called *Jockey Club Huan* which provides educational training and recreation at sea for young people. Launched in 1977, Adventure-Ship is the first charitable programme of its kind in Hong Kong. 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.

All young people above the age of nine are welcome to join the programme, which promotes personal development, but preference is given to disabled and underprivileged youths.

Jockey Club Huan went into service in April 2006. It can accommodate up to 60 people. The hull of this three-masted traditional-rig sailing junk is made of aluminum. The vessel is equipped with modern navigational devices in addition to a full range of amenities and various barriers-free training facilities tailored for trainees with disabilities.

More than 9 000 young people benefit from the programme each year. The junk plies within Hong Kong waters, and each training trip lasts between one and three days. 'Learning by experience' is the programme's main theme.

The training regime has been carefully designed to cope with different weather conditions and the special needs of young people with different aptitudes and backgrounds. Once on board, participants become members of the ship's supplementary crew and work alongside their peers. Instructors guide them and temper them to face challenges and to be self-reliant. The exercises also foster camaraderie 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 36 years of experience in running, planning and marketing hostels. The association is affiliated with Hostelling International, an organisation with 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.

The association organised the Ngong Ping Charity Walk at the scenic North Lantau Island Country Park in January during the year. It attracted over 1 200 participants and raised much needed funds for hostel improvement, environmental protection and conservation projects. In February, the HKYHA was commissioned to revitalise Mei Ho House, a seven-storey resettlement block in Shek Kip Mei, to be used as a city hostel, making it a landmark in Sham Shui Po. The hostel is expected to be opened in 2012.

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. The 24 country parks and 17 special areas provide extensive hiking trails, barbecue, picnic and camp sites and visitors' centres which attracted over 12.5 million visitors in 2009.

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 National Geopark

The Hong Kong National Geopark, which covers a land area of 5 000 hectares, was opened on November 3, 2009. It includes two regions covering eight geo-areas, each with its unique geological features. The Sai Kung Volcanic Rock Region displays spectacular hexagonal volcanic rock columns, which are considered world class both in terms of size and coverage. The Northeast New Territories Sedimentary Rock Region represents the most comprehensive stratigraphy of sedimentary rocks in Hong Kong, ranging from Devonian sandstone and conglomerate of about 400 million years of age to Tertiary siltstone of 65 million years old.

With the setting up of the geopark, Hong Kong's valuable geological resources will be better preserved and protected. The Government will continue its publicity and educational programme to raise public understanding and awareness of geoconservation.

Hong Kong Wetland Park

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

The park gives visitors the opportunity to appreciate wetlands and the wildlife of Hong Kong in an open and natural setting. In 2009, the park attracted over 440 000 visitors. The park also organised various educational and publicity programmes such as the Dragonfly Festival and Bird Watching Festival to cultivate awareness of wetland conservation.

Green Promotion/Initiatives

Green Hong Kong Campaign

Various community and educational activities were organised in 2009 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 and promotional talks.

More than 820 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. About 360 000 students from over 1 100 schools participated in a 'One Person, One Flower' programme. Dianthus 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. It 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 9 410 participants. A total of 27 tree planting activities were organised by the districts, attracting an attendance of over 9 640.

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. About 200 horticultural organisations from 20 countries took part in the 2009 show in March at Victoria Park, attracting more than 538 000 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 3.4 million plants, including trees, shrubs and seasonal flowers and carried out landscape improvement projects for 45.4 hectares of park land and roadside amenity areas.

Summer Youth Programme

The Summer Youth Programme (SYP) is a community-building programme co-ordinated by the Home Affairs Department 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 2009, the slogan 'Be Confident, Be Positive, Be an Achiever' was adopted to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China and to encourage young people to stay steadfast in adversity by putting faith in the future. Around 11 000 SYP activities were organised with more than 1.2 million participants² during 2009. The cost of holding these events was about \$42 million, of which \$16.5 million was sponsored 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

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

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

² including activities organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department independently with its own source of funding.