

Response of the Hong Kong Arts Administrators Association on the Cultural and Heritage Commission Consultation Paper 2002

Background

1.9. We wish to point out that the majority of art activities in Hong Kong belongs to this second domain of culture which largely rely on government funding. We are delighted to note that following this consultation exercise a cultural policy is being defined under the context of which the arts operate.

Education in Culture and the Arts

3. We strongly endorse the recommendations of Chapter 3. We are particularly pleased to note that many of the recommendations of the CHC Report coincide with the objectives and strategies of the Educational Reform.

3.11 We support the recommendation that local universities should take into greater account students' achievement in culture and the arts during their admission process.

3.13 Whilst we are in support of the development of more comprehensive recognition systems in the curriculum to cover a wide variety of arts disciplines at different levels, we caution against pursuing an examination-oriented approach in these subjects which would stifle students' interests in the arts..

3.22. We support the use of schools as a platform for arts education as well as expanding the functions and mode of operation of the Music Office to facilitate the development of school-based training courses. Since drama and dance activities are under-provided for in schools now, we believe that the ambit of the Music Office should be expanded into an Arts Office.

3.14 We agree that the infusion of the arts into other areas of learning has a lot of potential for development. However, we believe that a pre-requisite for such development would be the provision of special training for teachers and teaching artists who intend to adopt this approach.

Cultural Facilities

4.5. Since consultancy studies on libraries, museums, and cultural and performance venues had been commissioned, we believe that the Government should take note of the recommendations of these consultancy reports before finalizing its policies.

LIBRARIES

4.9 We believe that the function of public libraries as a place for leisure reading has continued relevance and should not be diminished or undermined although we agree that its functions should be expanded.

Base for cultural activities: We feel that it is important for libraries to feature only relevant cultural activities (activities which commensurate with its atmosphere and image) and not as a platform for indiscriminate peripheral activities.

Professionalism: We believe that the number of librarians in different public libraries should commensurate with the size and nature of the library concerned.

We suggest that an education officer should be appointed in each library to run its educational programmes and cultural activities.

4.13 We support the establishment of a “Libraries Board” but believe that it is very important for some of its members to have expert knowledge in this area.

MUSEUMS

4.14 We believe that conservation should be added as a main function of a museum.

4.16 We note that the quoted spending on exhibitions of \$50 million has not included the cost of the permanent exhibitions and is thus misleading. The CHC should present a more accurate figure in its final report.

4.19 We recommend that a Maritime Museum and a Film Museum be established in addition to the Museum of Modern Art.

4.20 Noting the example of overseas countries, we urge the Government to introduce legislation or museum act to properly define the status, responsibilities, and modes of operation of museums as well as the ethical requirements on their personnel. This will help provide a more healthy and favorable environment for the development of museums.

It seems to us that the proposal in this paragraph for the government to introduce measures to encourage community participation in the running of (small-scale thematic) museums contradicts in spirit with the proposal later (4.23) for the LCSD to continue to manage smaller-scale museums.

4.21 **Local private collectors:** We agree with the recommendation that private and organizational collectors should be encouraged to loan or donate parts of their collections to form a substantial and integral part of major exhibitions. . We note that such practice is being pursued by the LCSD and urge the government to consider incentives and legislation to encourage further development for this purpose.

Private enterprise: Whilst seeking of commercial sponsorship should be encouraged, we believe that the government should NOT diminish its financial resources to museums. Any sign of declining government commitment would be detrimental to attracting more commercial support.

Other Museums: We wish to point out that trading and authentication is NOT a function of museums, as evident from overseas examples.

4.23 We believe that it is important to co-ordinate the development of all public museums in Hong Kong at this stage. This could NOT be achieved by a Museums Board which merely defines the roles of individual museums and determine the allocation of government resources. We support in principle the establishment of a Museums Board but believe that its function should be similar to those of the Libraries Board overseeing the management of all the museums for at least the first three to five year period. We also support as a longer term objective that museums should be managed by Board of Trustees provided that migration of all professional staff to the new structure is ensured.

We recommend that smaller-scale museums should continue to be branch museums of the bigger /flagship museums. This will enable them to share the expertise and resources of the bigger museums.

We note that there are at present few persons in the local community who has expertise or experience in the governance of museums. This will affect the number of suitable candidates for forming Board of Trustees for individual flagship museums.

4.24 We are of the opinion that responsibilities of curators should include managing collections as well as research and organizing exhibitions. However, we support a change in the management structure of museums which encourage the development of specialized skills amongst curators.

CULTURAL & PERFORMANCE VENUES

4.28 We consider the classification of performance venues into territory-wide / thematic venues and district venues confusing. Civic Centres (classified as

district venues) are capable of supporting professional performances and are ideal thematic venues.

- 4.31 We believe that community involvement should be introduced in the Performance Venues area and propose that a statutory “Performance Venues Board” be established.

HKAAA Board members hold different views on the function of this Board. Some Board members believe that the Board should manage all performance venues directly, in a similar way as the Libraries Board. Other Board members feel that the Board should only co-ordinate the development of performing venues and determine the allocation of government resources. Major performance venues should be managed by Boards of Trustees with existing professional staff transferred en bloc to the new structure.

Review on Resources Deployment and Institutional Framework

- 5.4 **Supporting minority art forms:** We wish to point out that most art forms cannot survive in Hong Kong according to market mechanism due to the size of our audience. Government support is thus crucial to their continued existence.

- 5.9 In order to encourage the business sector to support and participate in cultural activities, we propose the government to introduce such incentives as matching funds and double tax deductions for business support in the arts.

- 5.10 **Community-driven as directive:** We believe it is important to define the meaning of “community” in this context. To us, cultural development should be driven by people in the community who have expertise on the subject, with the involvement of other stakeholders including artists, audience and arts administrators.

5.11 to 5.18 We note that the financial figures in para. 5.14 and those quoted of the cultural institutions merely show the cost and not the income. As such, it is difficult to reflect the true government subsidy on different items. 5.21 The HKAAA Board had grave concern over the CHC’s remark that “resources have been heavily skewed towards performing arts.” We feel that the statement was misleading. Firstly, the higher cost reflects higher public demand for such activities which are probably at a more advanced stage of development than other art forms in Hong Kong. Secondly, the income generated from performing arts activities is usually much higher compared with other cultural activities. The subsidy ratio is thus lower in comparison.

5.26 We agree that there is room for major venues/presenters under the various new Boards to seek sponsorship, particularly for prestigious overseas programmes. However, this will only divert existing sponsors from local performing arts companies and will be a matter of serious concern for our flagship companies.

5.27 We wish to point out that it is very difficult to attract private sponsorship to arts activities. A research released by the Central Policy Unit last year revealed that arts and sports are the lowest in priority in corporate giving. It should not be assumed that flagship companies would be able to solicit a substantial amount of sponsorship so that Government funding support for these companies could be reduced.

PROPOSALS ON INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

5.29-5.31 With the establishment of the statutory Libraries Board, Museums Board and Performance Board (our comments on para. 4.31 refer) and the transfer of all professional staff to the respective new entities, the HKAAA Board feels that there is little function to be performed by the LCSO which should be dissolved (save for its amenities and recreational functions) and should not be part of the new framework.

5.32-5.33 The HKAAA Board endorses in principle the provision of one single source of funding by the proposed Culture Foundation but advocates that various major venues, given autonomy in programming under the new framework, could provide alternative support for arts companies.

5.34 We believe that “Arts Interests Representatives” in the Culture Foundation should be limited to three members.

5.38 We believe that the Music Office should be moved to the Education Department.

5.39 We believe that the AMO should be changed into a statutory body with its own executive arm

5.40 We believe that it is important to have community involvement at the policy formulation level. We feel that an Advisory Board should continue the present role of the CHC. The Chairmen of the Libraries Board, Museum Board, Performance Venues Board and the Culture Foundation should be ex-official members in this Advisory Board.

Hong Kong Arts Administrators Association Limited

The Hong Kong Arts Administrators Association is a long standing and well established organization with members comprising senior arts administrators with extensive working experience past or present in Hong Kong's major arts organizations including but not limited to the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Fringe Club, Hong Kong Arts Development Council, the Hong Kong Ballet, Hong Kong Arts Festival, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Hong Kong Children's Choir, Leisure & Cultural Services Department, arts consultants/educators as well as private and commercial presenters.

The current office-bearers are:

Chairman	Kau NG	Executive Director Hong Kong Children's Choir
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Vice-Chairman	Margaret Yang	Chief Executive Hong Kong Sinfonietta
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Hon Treasurer	Cecilia Wong	Freelance Arts Administrator
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Hon Secretary	Tseng Sun-man	Arts Consultant/Educator
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Executive Committee Members include:

Phil Soden	Associate Director of Operations, HKAPA
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SW Chan	Chief Curator, LCSD
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Tony Ma	Assistant Director, LCSD
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Helen NG	Chief Executive, Hong Kong Ballet
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KC Lee	Freelance Administrator/presenter
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Richie Lam	Senior Manager, LCSD
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Lee Kin Chun	Freelance arts administrator/consultant
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Maria Liu	Freelance arts administrator
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