

22 June, 2002

## **LegCo Panel Convened to Consider the Sports Policy Review Paper Views of the Hong Kong Triathlon Association (HKTriA)**

While the HKTriA welcomes the results of the Sports Policy Review, we find the Paper disappointing and a wasted Opportunity. It is long on words but short on clear proposals and has been constrained by political objectives, poor imagination and erroneous assumptions about existing sports administration. The objectives are confused and would have been better stated as achieving (a) more involvement in sport, (b) better sports facilities, and (c) greater sporting glory

- **Sports Clubs:** Should be focused on specific sports and empowered to use sports facilities
- **Leisure & Cultural Services Department:** Should embrace a change in culture & mindset
- **Sports Commission:** Differing and conflicting responsibilities should be clarified

### Sports Clubs

In countries where a mature Sports culture exists, clubs are the lifeblood of Sports development. A wide diversity of sports-specific clubs should be encouraged so that Sports may appeal to as many people as possible Unfortunately, the Paper focuses on the relatively vague and unfocused notion of Community Sports Clubs and suggests that there is a continuing role for the equally unfocused District Sport Associations.

### Leisure & Cultural Services Department

LCSD (a) organises sports programmes and events, (b) designs and constructs Sports facilities, (c) manages Sports facilities, and (d) spends 98% of the \$2.5 billion cost. The culture of LCSD is inherently bureaucratic and NSAs and Clubs - not LCSD - should be in the business of organising sports programmes and events. NSAs should set suitable service level agreements with outsourced managers of sports facilities, leaving LCSD to co-ordinate and monitor. LCSD's limited experiments in outsourcing have not involved the NSAs and have focussed on cost reduction rather than quality improvement. The several initiatives identified in the Paper as additional LCSD responsibilities should not proceed as recommended.

### Sports Commission

We support having a single body responsible for the public funding of sport and a single body responsible for formulation of an integrated sports policy and strategy, from grass roots to elite and embracing both the community and schools. Both roles may be assumed by a Sports Commission provided that these are handled by a Policy Board responsible for policy and strategy formulation and an Executive Branch responsible for funding allocation. It is important a Sports Commission be empowered through legislation to follow through on its policy and strategy decisions. Many of the ideas featured in the Paper have been raised by SDB in the past but saw no progress since (a) SDB was not sufficiently empowered to implement them and (b) SDB encountered resistance from the SF & OC and LCSD.

### Conclusion

We urge Government to commission an independent group of Sports specialists from overseas to conduct an alternative review, free of Government interest. Overseas consultants should set out a fresh vision for the future of sports in Hong Kong. The Panel may recall that SDB was originally established as a result of a recommendation in such a review conducted in the 1980s and it was undoubtedly a good recommendation. However, SDB's success has since been frustrated for the reasons given above.

We will make a substantive submission on the Paper. Meantime, we believe the Paper as released will be of little use in making the necessary radical changes to create a wide and participatory sports culture in Hong Kong.

Andrew Patrick, President