

Submission to the Legco Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development by the Zonta Club of Hong Kong

The West Kowloon Cultural District development presents a unique opportunity for the HK Government to shape the long-term development of arts and culture in Hong Kong. At this critical juncture, it is worthwhile to address some basic issues:

Consider the cultural needs of Hong Kong

Culture and the arts in Hong Kong are still in a state of growth and flux. While there are a considerable number of public and private museums and performance venues already, arts education and support for the arts is still inconsistent. History has confirmed that culture and accomplishment in the arts is the measure of a successful and mature society. In the context of Hong Kong today, there are certain areas of concern which require attention if we are to move in that direction:

1. Better arts education- There is a severe lack of educational programmes and arts facilities in local schools, Hong Kong does not have a tertiary art institution, and there are few career prospects in the arts for the young. Upgrading basic education, awareness and training in the arts is an investment in the cultural future of Hong Kong.
2. Better arts facilities- There is need for better rehearsal facilities for performance groups and studio facilities for artist groups.
3. An independent Museum Authority- There is a need for an independent quasi-government Museum Authority to oversee the administration and management of all public-funded museums. This body would receive full government support and maintain its present administrative structure but enjoy greater administrative autonomy.
4. Good art collections- A good collection is the soul of a museum. Imagine any of the famous museums without their collections. They would be no more than elegant piles of stones. Do we have the collections to fill 4 museums? Or one museum? If not, we may be building a series of temporary exhibition spaces.

The cultural development plans for WKCD should wait until some of these issues are better resolved.

Nancy C. Lee
Public Affairs Committee
Zonta Club of Hong Kong
Email: zontahk@yahoo.com.hk