

**Sub-committee Meeting to be held on 23 October 2007**  
**The Hong Kong Construction Association Ltd's Views**  
**In respect of**  
**Recommendation Report of the Consultative Committee on the**  
**Core Arts and Cultural Facilities for the West Kowloon Cultural District**

The Hong Kong Construction Association Ltd (HKCA) is grateful to have the opportunity to present its views on the subject report.

HKCA commends the works that have been carried out by the Committee and the three Advisory Groups, which include a consultation exercise to solicit views from experts, stakeholders and the general public on the need for and the major requirements of the CACF. HKCA shares the views solicited and in particular the public's desire for the early implementation of the project. HKCA is also pleased to note that in order to facilitate the work of the Financial matters Advisory Group, the Government had engaged a Financial Advisor in August 2006 to explore various options and develop a financial model of the project based on inputs from other Advisory Groups and relevant Government departments.

As quite rightly pointed out in the report that no new public performance venue has been built in Hong Kong since 2000, and no major territory-wide, purpose-built performing arts venue has been built since the completion of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in 1989 with the exception of the 13,500 seats AsiaWorld-Arena commissioned in December 2005.

Consequently, there has been a serious shortage of centrally located, purpose designed performing arts venues of various seating capacities to meet the needs of different performances. There is also insufficient museum space and a lack of "flagship" museums with impressive architectural design to showcase the cultural characteristics of Hong Kong and the region.

Needless to say, there is also a strong desire for a free and accessible open space that is to be made available to the citizens and visitors of Hong Kong to witness the beautiful harbour views and to get a feel and a share of the prosperity of Hong Kong.

HKCA does not have a strong view on the proposed 15 performing arts venues of

various types and sizes as long as they meet the requirements of the users. The district will draw huge crowds at time and the transportation and pedestrian network will have to be carefully worked out under a master plan. Of course, the planning, layout and overall aesthetic consideration in the new Cultural Symbol Icons will be of paramount importance.

HKCA supports an upfront endowment of \$19.2 billion to meet the immediate establishment of the WKCD Authority but does not have strong views on whether the injection of fund to be in phases. The overriding consideration must be that the overall time frame in the delivery of the facilities must not be unreasonably delayed.

With regards to the WKCD project, HKCA has the following suggestions:

1. To enable the earliest delivery of the long awaited and much needed facilities, WKCD should adopt fast track construction contract arrangements, such as Design and Build, Design-Build-Operate, or other accelerated project delivery methods, for at least the initial phases of the development.
2. WKCD Authority is an establishment set up by the Government and should therefore follow Government practices in tendering and administration of construction contracts
3. Since government retains the responsibilities of providing some of the infrastructure facilities, these contracts should be rolled out as quickly as possible and in parallel with the establishment of the WKCD Authority in order to avoid any delays caused by a lack of appropriate infrastructure.

## **Conclusion**

HKCA fully supports the proposed plan to develop the site of West Kowloon Reclamation into an arts and cultural district. The idea of the West Kowloon cultural district project was first launched in 2001 and has been the subject of public concern and debate for a number of years. In order to gain the most out of the proposed project and for the benefit of the public at large, it is of paramount importance to have the public consultation and deliberation finalized as quickly as possible and a decision made on the way forward such that the master layout plan can be finalized without further delay and the scheme implemented.