

**Consultative Committee on the  
Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the  
West Kowloon Cultural District**

**Performing Art and Tourism Advisory Group**

**Summary of Views from Written Submissions Received**

**Purpose**

This paper provides a summary of views from written submission received on the need for performing arts facilities as Core Arts and Cultural Facilities in the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD)

**Advice Sought**

2. Members are invited to note the views from written submissions on the need for performing art and other related facilities in WKCD (paragraph 5).

**Background**

3. At the third PATAG meeting held on 22 June 2006, Members noted the summary of views received so far at the sector-specific focus group meetings and the open consultative forums (Information Paper PATAG/13/2006 refers). Members also noted that views received from written submission during the consultation period were still being consolidated and would be presented separately.

4. To gauge views from the public, in addition to open consultative forums, members of the public were invited to submit written submissions to the Secretariat from 15 May 2006 to 16 June 2006.

### **Views Received from Written Submissions**

5. By the end of the consultation period, we received 44 written submissions. Among them, 17 were related to performing arts facilities, the list of senders at **Annex A**. The summary of views is at **Annex B**. Moreover, we had sought advice from members of the Public Affairs Forum (an online forum, operated by the Home Affairs Bureau, to canvass views on major political and public issues). Over 60 responses were received of which 38 were related to performing arts facilities and tourism. The summary of views is at **Annex C**.

7. Since no express consent has been given by the senders of the written submissions to release their names to the public, the written submissions are for internal reference only.

**Secretariat, Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group**  
**June 2006**

**List of Written Submissions Received  
which are related to Performing Arts and Tourism aspects  
of the West Kowloon Cultural District  
during the Consultation Period**

**[For Internal Reference Only]**

***Summary of Views from Written Submissions Received***

- (i) There was a suggestion that a dedicated performing arts high school be built at WKCD. This was needed to catch up with arts educational practice around the world and prepare gifted young performers in dance, drama, and music to develop a career in the performing arts. The high school could be a dual-role educational facility that would perform in the daytime as a specialist performing arts school and in the evenings and at weekends as a centre for community arts education to enhance participation in, and appreciation of the arts among a broad social spectrum of people.
  
- (ii) Cantonese Opera should be given a permanent performing venue in WKCD in order to preserve this traditional art form. There was a request for a Xiqu Centre to be built in WKCD. The Centre would comprise a performance venue of 1,000 seats for Xiqu, a 500-seat Xiqu experimental theatre for training budding artists for professional performances and 4 to 5 well-equipped rehearsal rooms. There was another suggestion of the need of a purpose-built theatre of about 1,200 seats dedicated for Xiqu performances and a smaller theatre of 400 seats as a performance venue to nurture budding artists in the sector.

- (iii) There was a suggestion which advocated the strengthening of arts promotion in grass roots through co-operation with district art bodies and that the principle of ‘ people-oriented’ should be upheld in developing WKCD.
- (iv) The development of performing arts was much hindered by the lack of performing venues and the much long-for performing venues in WKCD would help to solve the problem.
- (v) One submission stated that the fusion of performing arts and tourism in WKCD would be effective and desirable in boosting tourism in Hong Kong. Popular culture, films and Cantonese Opera were rich themes to attract tourists. Consideration could be given to have a ‘street for dance’ on Sundays where the dance-lovers and the public could enjoy themselves in WKCD. A Dance Library like the one in Lincoln Centre was also suggested.
- (vi) There is a request for a permanent home for opera in WKCD. An opera house with a seating capacity of 2,500 to 3,000 was needed. Also, there should be a large auditorium of 15,000 to 20,000 seats for multiple forms of performances. It was important that the backstage facilities of the proposed performing venues should be capable of catering for big scale productions.
- (vii) A submission supported the originally proposed Water Amphitheatre and four Piazza Areas, as they would make free entertainment available and thus enhance culture education for the public. However, purpose-built venues were not preferred.

There was a need to include ferry facility in WKCD to improve accessibility and to attract tourists.

- (viii) A submission advocated for developing WKCD's CACF to world-class standard and most importantly, integrating the facilities within the compound of a well designed and beautifully landscaped Green Park (without any commercial and residential property on the site), creating the land into a truly leisure hub of Hong Kong and a 'must-go' for locals and tourists.
- (ix) There was a suggestion for WKCD, from the architectural and planning angle, to maintain a high flexibility for both spatial and functional extension. Efforts should be made to the continuation and development of traditional arts forms. The Government should allocate more resources to nurture art profession, particularly art administrators.
- (x) An opinion stated that a considerable number of venues with small capacities (200 to a maximum of 1,000) were preferred to big venues. There should also be really small live house of 50 seats integrated with the shops and cafes which would allow home sprung musicians and artists showcasing their talents.
- (xi) There was a suggestion to build three hotels, ranging from three to six stars standard. These hotels should cluster with the arts and cultural facilities in the district. A certain percentage of the income of the hotels could be set aside as the operating cost for the arts and cultural facilities.

- (xii) There was a suggestion of placing the cruise terminals in WKCD as one of the core facilities. The cruise terminals would generate additional business for both planned and existing cultural, arts, retail and hotels facilities in West Kowloon and Tsim Sha Tsui.

**Summary of Views Received  
from the Public Affairs Forum on Performing Arts  
Facilities in West Kowloon Cultural District**

Forum members posted a total of 38 messages in respect of the performing arts and cultural facilities. Their comments were summarised below.

1. Many members agreed with the proposed seating capacities of the three theatres as defined in the original IFP. They should have seating capacities of at least 3 000, 2 000 and 1 000 seats respectively.
2. There were suggestions that one of the theatres in the theatre complex should contain more than 2 000 seats or at least 3 000 seats. On the other hand, a member hoped to have smaller theatres with seating capacities of less than 2 000 seats each.
3. One of the members proposed that the three theatres in the theatre complex should allow for flexibility of grouping into one big theatre when the need arose.
4. Many members supported the proposal of having a ‘theatreland’ covering two to three streets with a considerable number of performing venues of smaller seating capacities. One member, however, believed that venues with 400 or less seats were too small
5. A member preferred the theatreland be galleria-like with food courts to create a relaxing atmosphere.

6. More members preferred a single multi-purpose performing arts venue with flexibility and diversity to a mix of multi-purpose venues and purpose-built venues for specific performing art forms. The major rationale for a single multi-purpose venue was flexibility as popularity of performing arts changed over time.
7. The majority of the Members preferred to have a performing arts venues of larger seating capacity say over 15,000.
8. A few members did not agree to build another large performing arts venue in WKCD. One member pointed out that the high usage rate at the Hong Kong Coliseum reflected saturation several years ago. Recently, the utilization rate of the Hong Kong Coliseum was quite low as the number of popular concerts was declining. However, another member preferred to have a performance venue with at least 10 000 seats and equipped with good visual and audio facilities in WKCD.
9. For members who preferred purpose-built venues, most of them agreed that there should be such a venue for Cantonese Opera.
10. Members were generally in favour of having outdoor performing arts venue in WKCD. Some members suggested having a vast piece of grassland near the harbour-front.
11. In view of Hong Kong's hot and humid climate, a few respondents remarked that outdoor performance would not appeal to the audience in summer and disagreed with having outdoor performance venue in WKCD.

12. Many members supported traditional Chinese Opera as a major tourism attraction. One member proposed to stage Cantonese Opera in English.
13. A member opined that WKCD would be an appropriate place for world-class performing arts, while another member reckoned that the venues should accommodate traditional performing arts (e.g. 懷舊戲棚 and 江湖賣藝區).
14. There were also other suggestions of performing arts forms like music, dancing, concerts, circus, Shao-Lin Kung-Fu (少林功夫), Taekwondo, Hong Kong modern performing arts and drawing.
15. Many members suggested hosting international arts festivals so as to combine local, traditional and international arts and cultural elements to attract local and overseas visitors.
16. A member proposed to apply the “fusion concept” in the Food & Beverages industry to performing arts, e.g., Cantonese Opera sung in English, and painting Chinese calligraphy using Western approach.
17. A few members pointed out the need to attract top-tier performers (like those from Vienna, London and Broadway) to Hong Kong for world-class performances. Another member opined that we should concentrate on four to five most popular performing arts as pillar programmes, to ensure high quality performance and secure enough audience.

18. Another member suggested having some free-of-charge performances to attract local visitors and to develop their interests in arts.
19. Some members proposed to establish a school on performing arts in the WKCD for training artistic talent of our next generation.
20. There was a proposal to set aside places for students to discuss or attend short briefings before touring around or after seeing a performance.
21. A member proposed having one or a series of “black-box” theatres to display creative short movies by local artists.
22. Other suggestions included facilities for arts and crafts, training and practice facilities, and a market place.
23. A few members suggested the proposed performing arts facilities of WKCD to stage large-scale regional-level performance while some of the existing venues to stage district-level performance.
24. A few members suggested the setting up of a joint committee to plan and coordinate all art and performance events in Hong Kong. This would help to prevent competition between different performing arts venues and to ensure fully utilisation of resources.
25. Some members suggested strengthening the education of arts and culture at school along side the development of WKCD. A member warned that unless the CACF were well utilized, we would end up building a big white elephant.

26. A member proposed the Government to increase financial support to local performing arts groups. Another member urged the Government to sponsor WKCD project and invest in the district in the long run.
27. A member reminded that shopping and dining places should not be omitted when planning the WKCD.
28. A member believed that deeper understanding of the needs of the public was required before coming to a decision in the WKCD project. Yet there were a few others who believed that the project should be launched as soon as possible.