

Your Ref: CB2/PL/HA

To: Clerk to Panel on Home Affairs

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From: Dr Gillian Bickley, Managing Editor, Proverse Hong Kong.

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Date: 30 January 2009

Re: Panel on Home Affairs,

Special meeting on Friday, 6 February 2009, at 8.30am in Conference Room A the

Legislative Council Building:

Proposed injection of funds into the Arts and Sport Development Fund

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Thank you for the invitation to provide a submission / make an oral representation.

I have studied the Administration's proposal for injection of funds into the Arts and Sport Development Fund on the link as quoted in your letter dated 16 January 2009.

We support the proposal to inject funds into the Arts and Sport Development Fund.

We note that, of the \$150 million proposed, the funds are stated to be \$60 million for the arts portion and \$90 million for the sports portion.

Is it possible to increase the total amount available? And is it possible to change the proposed proportions?

The document seems not to provide any rationale for the proportions proposed.

We note that in 1997, the proportion of a total \$300 million approved for ASDF was \$160 million and \$140 million respectively for Arts and Sport. In 2007, of \$80 million injected, \$40 million was for each of arts and sports. The proportion proposed now moves the share of the funding, for a second time, away from the Arts. (In 1997, it was approved for Arts to receive more than Sport. In 2007 the same sum was injected for Arts as for Sport. It is now proposed that Arts should receive less than Sport.)

The term "Arts" is used throughout the document, and this includes "Literary Arts". It is the "Literary Arts" that I am concerned to speak for at the present time. It is not clear to me from this document whether any part of HKADC funding is earmarked for Literary Arts or whether Literary Arts are in direct competition with all other Arts for funds.

Proverse Hong Kong, whom I represent today, has previously applied, as publisher, for Project Grants from HKADC. As a writer myself, I have also previously applied for Project Grants from HKADC. In response to these applications, grants have both been awarded and not awarded. When grants have not been awarded, the reason given has

been, more often than not, that the HKADC budget was very small and that there were inadequate funds to support all worthwhile projects. It seems likely that this response has been typical rather than atypical. I am aware of other such cases.

If we look at the documentation issued by HKADC for the guidance of grant applicants, a recurrent theme in relation to literary arts is the shortage of funds. (It may also be a theme in the documentation issued in relation to other Arts; but I have not now focusing on them.)

It would be helpful if the breakdown of number of awards / total amount of funding (pp. 3 & 4, paras 7 and 8) for literary arts could be set down separately.

It will also be helpful to see what the proposed allocation of funding for literary arts is, going forward (p. 4, paras 9 and 10).

It would be helpful to know, with reference to each round of applications, over the relatively short period of existence of HKADC, the following:

1. the total number of applications to support literary publication projects received by HKADC,
2. the total amount of funding applied for through these literary publications,
3. the total number of literary publication projects supported,
4. the total amount of funding allocated for these literary publication projects,
5. whether or not the contents of the HKADC letter, stating that no award could be made, included words to the effect that there had been a number of worthy applications but that there were inadequate funds to support all such worthy applications.

In association with the above, it would be useful to have notes indicating any changes in the administration of the grants which could have had an influence on the above data.

It would also be useful to know what proportions of points 1 to 5 inclusive relate to writing in English, writing in Chinese, translations into English, translations into Chinese.

The information solicited above would give some guidance as to how much more funding support for literary arts could have been well spent in the past. This also would give some guidance as to the funding support for literary arts that could be well spent in the future, and hence how much could validly be allocated to Literary Arts at the present time.

This could have implications for the size of the injection to be currently made to the Arts and Sport Development Fund as a whole, as well as the proportions as between Arts and Sport.

Members may know that the literary arts scene in Hong Kong is burgeoning.

Proverse Hong Kong, whom I represent today, has itself recently founded The Proverse Prize for unpublished non-fiction, fiction, or poetry, submitted in English (may be a translation).\* The Award Ceremony will be held in Hong Kong in early 2010. The rationale of The Proverse Prize is consonant with that of HKADC. It aims to encourage writers. It aims to encourage excellence and usefulness in literary arts in general and in literary arts in Hong Kong. It aims to promote the reputation of Hong Kong as a centre of excellence for literary arts. This is a considerable effort for a small press and it relies on the goodwill, energy and initiative of the publishers and on the professional goodwill of the friends and acquaintances they have made during their combined 100 years relevant experience. Others in Hong Kong also give considerable effort to promoting Literary Arts in different ways. \*(Full details at [geocities.com/proversehk/proverse\\_prize](http://geocities.com/proversehk/proverse_prize))

If more funding were available for these efforts, the outcome of these efforts would undoubtedly be enhanced.

Although, as far as we know, the aims of HKADC do not include supporting or enhancing the quality of either English Language or Chinese Language usage in Hong Kong, to the extent that HKADC supports writers and writing in these two Languages, it must have an impact in these areas.

If HKADC could demonstrate that it has a budget consistently to support writing in each of these two languages, HKADC could have an impact in enhancing Language usage in Hong Kong also.

Proverse Hong Kong is very pleased with the encouragement that it has received in the past from HKADC and from the helpful attitude of the staff with whom we have been in contact.

We would be happy to compete for a share of a larger amount of funding, to fulfill our own mission in a broader way, for the benefit of literary arts in general and of literary arts in Hong Kong where we are based.

Gillian Bickley  
Managing Editor, Proverse Hong Kong