



香港工程師學會

THE HONG KONG INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS

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By mail and by fax at 2185 7845

31 December 2007

Clerk to Subcommittee
Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development
Legislative Council Secretariat
3rd Floor, Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road, Central
Hong Kong

(Attn: Mr Anthony CHU)

Dear Mr Chu,

**LegCo Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development –
Views on the proposal in relation to the establishment of a statutory body to take
forward the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District project**

Thank you for your letter of 4 December 2007 inviting the Institution to put forth our views on the proposal in relation to the establishment of a statutory body to take forward the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District project.

We have received expert views from our members and are pleased to provide herewith our submission for consideration and discussion at the Subcommittee meeting.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Ir Dr LO Wai Kwok MH JP
President

Encl

Enclosure

Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development

**Views from the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
on Government's Proposal in relation to the establishment of a statutory body to
take forward the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District Development**

Introduction

1. The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) recognises the importance and benefit of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) Development to the community at large and would like to express our support to this prominent project (being one of the 10 major infrastructure projects in this year's Policy Address). We believe that the project not only provides a physical congregation and clustering of arts and cultural facilities for the general public, but also fosters the long-term cultural and economic development in Hong Kong.
2. The Recommendation Report submitted by the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the WKCD recommended Government to proceed to draw up the requisite legislative proposal for setting up a statutory body, with WKCD Authority (WKCDA) as its working title, to take forward the project. Considering the importance of the WKCDA on the full implementation of the development, the Institution would like to submit below our views on the proposed legislation.

Composition of WKCDA

3. The Government's proposal proposes that the WKCDA should be governed by a board ("the Board") comprising not more than 20 people including a Chairman, a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), 3 public officer members and not more than 15 members from the community in their personal capacity. Members are to be appointed by the Chief Executive (CE) for a period of not more than three years.
4. In the Government's proposal, the Board will comprise individuals from various arts and cultural sector and other relevant sectors of the community considered to be relevant to the development and operation of the WKCD. As such, it may be anticipated that members from the Legislative Council (LegCo), Hong Kong Arts Development Council, Town Planning Board, District Councils, arts and cultural sector and professionals would be appointed into the Board. To avoid unnecessary politicisation, the Institution opposes the proposal of having a number of members from a few limited cultural sectors who are to be elected by voting in their sector.
5. We would also like to emphasise that a professional engineer's inputs on WKCD development with his/her engineering and construction expertise would be crucial to the success of the development projects, as well as on the management of the facilities.

Upfront endowment policy

6. Government will seek LegCo's approval for an upfront endowment of \$21.6 billion to be given to the WKCDA upon its establishment to finance the capital costs of the facilities under the purview of the WKCDA over the project period. We note that there are views supporting endowment by instalments according to construction periods so that monitoring of the usage of public moneys could be strengthened.

7. We are of the view that endowment by instalments may have negative impact to the development of the entire project. It has not been customary for construction project to apply endowment by instalments in the past. We opine that LegCo should have confidence on the professionals and support the upfront endowment to ensure the construction of the project can be implemented in a smooth and uninterrupted manner.

Expedite the implementation of the project

8. The WKCD project has been delayed for years and the Government undoubtedly has the responsibility to put its greatest effort in accomplishing some of the items in order to cater for the community's needs on public facilities such as park, waterfront promenade, etc. It should be noted that the business community may have expectations and views on provision of facilities (such as exhibition space, offices, hotels) around the terminal of the planned Guangzhou Shenzhen Hong Kong Express Rail Link. We are of the opinion that the planning on the development of basic facilities such as waterfront promenade and the property development around the Express Rail Link terminal should not be vested with the WKCDA. The Government should be the responsible party to put forward the planning and implementation of these developments.