

Chairman,
Panel on Economic Services
Legislative Council,
8, Jackson Road, Central,
Hong Kong.

18 February 2005

Dear Mr. Tien,

Emergency services provided by Government Flying Service

The Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group has noted that the Agenda for the upcoming meeting of the Islands District Council (IDC) on 21st February, 2005, includes questions from an IDC member seeking assurances that shared use of the proposed Central Heliport near the Golden Bauhinia Square in Wanchai would not compromise emergency services. We also note a report in the Oriental Daily News dated 16th February on the same subject and wish to make clear the following facts:

- (1) The private and public sectors of the Helicopter Industry have worked closely together and shared facilities in the Central Business District for some forty years without difficulty.
- (2) All helicopter flights in Hong Kong are controlled from the air traffic control tower at Chek Lap Kok via radio communication. Government Flying Service (GFS) flights will always take precedence over a commercial flight in an emergency. As such, it is not possible to envisage any circumstances where a delay might occur on account of the helipad not being available.
- (3) The Group is not aware of any incident such as is claimed in the news report of cases where GFS helicopters carrying out medical evacuations have been required to wait for private helicopters to clear from a landing pad.

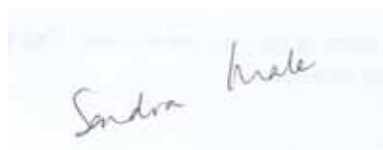
(4) In the event of a medical emergency, there are other helipads designated for use by the GFS that are far more convenient to appropriate hospitals than that planned for Wanchai.

The Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group fully subscribes to any policy that enables residents to have priority in use of the planned Central Heliport for emergency services. We look forward to seeing Government set down in detail the working procedures as to how this may be ensured.

Why Single-engine helicopters cannot use Elevated Helipads

In response to another news report (13 February 2005, Sing Pao) inferring that single-engine helicopters can use elevated pads such as that at the Macau Ferry Terminal, we would like to clarify that according to International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Standards and Recommended Practices, single-engine helicopters are not permitted to operate from elevated heliports or helidecks. All ICAO contracting members which include the Hong Kong SAR follow these standards.

The Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group remains committed to working closely with Government and the community at large to design a heliport for shared use between GFS and commercial operators in the Central Business District.



Sandra Mak
for and on behalf of
Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group



- c.c. Panel on Economic Services
- Panel on Planning, Lands and Works
- Islands District Council
- Economic Development and Labour Bureau
- Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
- Security Bureau