Leisure and Culture

Hong Kong residents have access to a wide range of sports, recreational and cultural facilities. Many of these are built and managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). The main objective of the department is to enrich the community’s quality of life through the promotion and provision of recreational and cultural facilities and activities.

Leisure Services: The LCSD provides facilities to foster public participation in recreation and sports activities and organises a wide range of programmes. It also beautifies the environment through planting of trees and other plants in public parks and amenity areas.

Recreational and Sports Venues: There are a great number of facilities to provide leisure services, including 25 sports grounds, 44 swimming pool complexes, 41 gazetted bathing beaches, 101 sports centres, 82 turf pitches, 235 hard-surfaced mini-soccer pitches, 527 basketball courts, 252 tennis courts, 292 squash courts and 651 leisure venues providing children's playgrounds. Other facilities such as hockey pitches, horse riding schools and golf driving ranges are also provided. The LCSD also manages five water sports centres (Stanley Main Beach, St Stephen's Beach, Chong Hing, The Jockey Club Wong Shek and Tai Mei Tuk) and four holiday camps (Lei Yue Mun Park, Lady MacLehose Holiday Village, Sai Kung and Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centres). The 12 500-seat Hong Kong Coliseum and the 3 500-seat Queen Elizabeth Stadium are the focal points for important indoor sporting events while the 40 000-seat Hong Kong Stadium is a major venue for staging large-scale sporting and spectator events.

Recreation and Sports Activities: The LCSD organises and promotes various leisure activities for people of all ages. In 2019-20, the department organised some 33 700 recreation and sports activities for 2 851 000 participants of all ages and abilities.

To encourage the public to improve their health through participating in physical activities and sports, the LCSD and the Department of Health jointly organised the Healthy Exercise for All Campaign. In 2019-20, more than 1 300 programmes were organised for around 50 000 participants under the Campaign which included Dance Night under Dance for Health, QualiWalk, Hiking Scheme, Rope Skipping Activities, Fitness Training Courses for Children and Outreach Fitness Programmes for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly. Health education and physical exercise-related materials were produced in the form of DVDs, leaflets and booklets, and uploaded onto a dedicated webpage in the LCSD website so as to encourage a healthy lifestyle through regular participation in physical activities and sports.

To intensify the promotion of Sport for All in the community and to support the National Fitness Day, the LCSD organised the Sport For All Day in August 2019. A series of free recreation and sports programmes were organised in 18 districts throughout the territory and some fee-charging leisure facilities were open for free use by the public on the day, to enhance public interest in sporting activities and encourage the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle through regular participation in sporting and physical exercises.

The Sports Subvention Scheme provides financial assistance to National Sports Associations (NSAs) and Sports Organisations (SOs) for organising sports programmes and training athletes. In 2019-20, the scheme provided subventions for NSAs and SOs to organise some 10 150 sports promotion events for about 677 270 participants. The scheme includes the Young Athletes Training Scheme to identify talented young players and District Sports Teams Training Scheme for enhancing a stronger sense of belonging among residents.

The School Sports Programme and the Community Sports Club Project, launched by the department, have been further promoting sports and cultivating a new sport culture in Hong Kong. The aim of the two programmes is to provide more opportunities for students and members of the public to participate in sports. In 2019-20, 6 549 activities were organised with more than 537 540 students participating. Subsidies were granted for community sports clubs to organise about 2 310 sports development programmes for 48 620 participants.

Hong Kong Games (HKG): With a view to further promoting Sport for All in the community, the LCSD collaborated with the Sports Commission and its Community Sports Committee, 18 District Councils, the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China and the relevant NSAs to hold the HKG biennially from 2007 onwards. The 7th HKG was successfully held from 2018 to 2019, attracting over 3 300 athletes from the 18 districts to take part in eight sports competitions, namely athletics, badminton, basketball, futsal, swimming, table tennis, tennis and volleyball. More than 900 000 people participated in the sports competitions and the related community participation programmes of the 7th HKG.
**Horticulture and Landscape Services:** The LCSD is responsible for improving the environment with landscape planting, beautification schemes and tree preservation. It manages about 1,609 parks and gardens of various sizes, including 26 major parks throughout Hong Kong.

Since 2000, the LCSD has been holding the annual Hong Kong Flower Show at Victoria Park. The show is a highlight in the local horticultural calendar. It provides a good opportunity for hundreds of thousands of local citizens and plant lovers from all over the world to appreciate the beauty of flowers and share their experiences in horticulture. Featuring gorgeous landscape displays and beautiful floral arrangements, the show also offers a rich diversity of fringe activities for the enjoyment of visitors of all ages including music and cultural performances, floral art demonstrations, guided tours, horticultural talks, drawing and photo competitions, green activities workshops and fun games. However, the Hong Kong Flower Show 2020, originally scheduled to be held from March 6 to 15, was cancelled amid the epidemic of Coronavirus Disease 2019.

To enhance public awareness about greening the environment, a series of interesting and educational green activities such as Green Volunteer Scheme, Greening School Subsidy Scheme, ‘One Person, One Flower’ Scheme, Community Garden Programme, Community Planting Day, Horticulture Education Exhibition, horticultural courses and seminars are also organised for public participation every year.

**Cultural Services:** The LCSD provides a wide range of performance facilities, cultural and entertainment programmes to promote the development and appreciation of performing and visual arts. Apart from managing 16 performance venues, the department also stages presentations of various art forms as well as international festivals and arts education activities. It offers concessionary discounts to full-time students, senior citizens and people with disabilities.

**Major Performance Venues:**

**Hong Kong Cultural Centre:** Opened in 1989, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre has since been a major performing arts venue attracting overseas leading artists and local major performing companies, and a prime performance venue for large-scale arts festivals. It houses a 2,020-seat Concert Hall, a 1,734-seat Grand Theatre and a 303-496 seat Studio Theatre.

**Hong Kong City Hall:** Established in 1962, the Hong Kong City Hall is the first multi-purpose cultural complex built to enhance the quality of life amongst the Hong Kong community. Its classic Bauhaus-style of architecture has made it one of Hong Kong’s landmarks since inception. The complex was designated as a Grade 1 Historic Building by the Antiquities Advisory Board in late 2009. Hong Kong City Hall plays an important role in popularising the arts and promoting Eastern and Western cultures. Its facilities include a 1,430-seat Concert Hall, a 463-seat Theatre, a Recital Hall, an Exhibition Hall and an Exhibition Gallery.

**Yau Ma Tei Theatre:** The Theatre was constructed in 1930 and is a Grade 2 historic building. The Theatre and the adjacent Red Brick Building (Grade 1 historic building) have been revitalised as a performance base dedicated to Chinese opera performances and activities, and as a training and performance venue for budding Cantonese opera talents. It was reopened in 2012 to house a 300-seat Theatre.

**Hong Kong Coliseum and Queen Elizabeth Stadium:**

Opened in 1980 and 1983 respectively, the 3,500-seat Queen Elizabeth Stadium and the 12,500-seat Hong Kong Coliseum are two well-equipped multi-purpose indoor stadia most suitable for large-scale sports, cultural and entertainment programmes. The Coliseum in particular is a leading venue for major international sports events, cultural and entertainment spectacles such as pop concerts.

**Other Venues:** Other performance venues in the territory including Sha Tin Town Hall, Tsuen Wan Town Hall, Tuen Mun Town Hall, Kwai Tsing Theatre, Yuen Long Theatre, Sheung Wan Civic Centre, Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre, Ngau Chi Wan Civic Centre, Ko Shan Theatre and New Wing, North District Town Hall and Tai Po Civic Centre are the foci for cultural activities in the community level.

**Cultural Festivals and Performances:** Cultural life of Hong Kong is enriched by the year-round cultural and entertainment programmes organised by the LCSD. To broaden the perspectives of audiences and arts practitioners and to promote Hong Kong’s cosmopolitan image, the LCSD endeavors to present programmes by top-notch artists. In 2019-20, a series of special programmes were arranged to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, including concerts-cum-live relay by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Simon Rattle with pianists Emanuel Ax and local talents Colleen Lee and Aristo Sham; concerts of violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, conductor and pianist Sir András Schiff and Cappella Andrea Barca; *The Great Tamer* by Dimitris Papaionannou; *XENOS* by Akram Khan Company; *Nuhikun (Directions to Servants)* by director Terayama Shuji; and the traditional set piece *The Imperial Emperor of Heaven Holding Court* by a number of local Cantonese Opera artists organised by The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong.

The LCSD also organised the annual Chinese Opera Festival from June to August that featured a variety of operatic genre for promoting Chinese operatic art. The 10th edition opened in 2019 with the programme ‘Peking Opera Masters North and South’ by China National Peking Opera Company and Shanghai Jingju Theatre Company at the Xiqu Centre of West Kowloon Cultural District. Meanwhile, the annual International Arts Carnival held in July and August provided children, teenagers and their families with fun-filled cultural programmes and interactive activities during summer. The carnival attracted over 85,000 participants with more than 260 stage performances and activities. Autumn came the World Cultures Festival, to showcase the unique traditions and contemporary cultures of the five Nordic countries. More than 60,000 people participated in about 120 performances and activities. Large scale festive events were also organised. 2019 Mid-Autumn Lantern Displays attracted more than 1,050,000 participants.

On top of these cultural and entertainment activities, various schemes of audience building and arts education activities are also presented in collaboration with local arts groups and educational and district organisations with an aim to promote appreciation of the arts in the community and at schools. A total of 1,007 arts education and audience building activities were organised under these schemes in the year, attracting more than 204,000 participants. To further promote arts development and enhance artistic ambience in the community, the LCSD launched the Community Arts Scheme in Wan Chai and Sai Kung districts in 2019-20 in collaboration with District Councils and district organisations. Programmes showcasing artistry and creativity of local artists were also staged outside Hong Kong including the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and the first-ever ‘Festival Hong Kong 2019 – A Cultural Extravaganza@Shanghai’ in November 2019 attracted around 400,000 participants for 90 activities.

In view of the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019, the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society cancelled the February and March 2020 performances and activities of the 48th Hong Kong Arts Festival.

Music Office: The Music Office, managed by the LCSD, promotes knowledge and appreciation of music in the community, especially among young people, through the provision of instrumental and ensemble training and the organisation of various music activities with a view to building a new generation of concert audiences. In 2019-20, it provided music training to more than 8,000 trainees and organised more than 340 activities attracting about 152,000 participants.

URBTIX: Since its inception in 1984, URBTI X (Urban Ticketing System) has become one of the most widely-used ticketing systems in Hong Kong offering convenient and reliable ticketing services for the public through its wide network of about 20 outlets, and via internet, mobile app and telephone booking services. In 2019-20, over $974 million was processed through URBTI X for some 2.81 million tickets for over 8,600 performances.

Other Performance Venues and Performing Companies in Hong Kong:

Hong Kong Arts Centre (HKAC), established in 1977, is a non-profit organisation operating under a self-financing model, devoting itself to the development of contemporary arts and cultures for years. The HKAC’s main building in Wan Chai is equipped with facilities including theatres, a cinema, galleries, classrooms, studios and restaurants, providing a wide range of programmes featuring performing arts, visual arts, film and video arts every month while planning public art projects, conferences and more. The Hong Kong Art School under the HKAC is an accredited institute established in 2000. The four core academic areas are Fine Art, Applied Art, Media Art, and Applied Theatre and Drama Education.

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, established in 1984, offers professional education, training and research facilities in the performing arts: music, dance, drama, theatre and entertainment arts, film and television, and Chinese opera. Its education philosophy reflects Hong Kong’s cultural diversity underscored by Chinese and Western traditions, and an emphasis on interdisciplinary learning.

In 2019-20, the academy enrolled 865 students for undergraduate and post-secondary programmes in its six performing arts disciplines, and attracted 130 students to pursue master’s degree programmes in dance, music, drama, film and television, and theatre and entertainment arts. It admitted more than 630 students to its junior programmes and over 2,200 students to its Extension and Continuing Education for Life programme.

Major Performing Arts Companies:

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, became fully professional in 1974, is the first and largest professional symphony orchestra in Hong Kong that presents a broad-based repertoire, including classical music and contemporary works.

The Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, founded in 1977, is the only professional Chinese orchestra in Hong Kong that presents symphonic music based on traditional folk repertoire and full-scale contemporary compositions.

Hong Kong Sinfonietta, founded in 1999, is a professional orchestra which presents a broad-based repertoire (including standard classical music, contemporary works, original crossover productions) and provides accompaniment to ballet and opera performances.

The Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, established in 1977, is a professional theatre company that produces a diverse repertoire of Chinese and overseas classics, and develops quality local works.

Chung Ying Theatre Company, founded in 1979, is a professional theatre company dedicated to creating high
quality theatrical productions and promoting theatrical arts education through diversified activities.

**Zuni Icosahedron**, founded in 1982, is a multimedia experimental theatre company that makes creative attempts in the various aspects of theatre, and participates in arts education, arts criticism and international cultural exchanges.

**The Hong Kong Dance Company**, founded in 1981, is a professional Chinese dance company which aims to promote Chinese dance and dance drama in a unique Hong Kong style.

**Hong Kong Ballet**, founded in 1978, is a professional dance company which presents a broad-based repertoire, including classical ballets, contemporary works and original productions.

**City Contemporary Dance Company**, founded in 1979, is a professional modern dance company that nurtures talents in the contemporary dance field. It also actively stages performances overseas.

**Heritage and Museums**: The LCSD endeavours to provide and develop museums and related services to build up historic, art and science collections, preserve local cultural heritage and promote public appreciation for it.

The LCSD manages two art museums – Hong Kong Museum of Art and Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware; two science and technology museums – Hong Kong Science Museum and Hong Kong Space Museum; nine history and folk museums – Hong Kong Museum of History, Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence, Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum, Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum, Law Uk Folk Museum, Sheung Yiu Folk Museum, Sam Tung Uk Museum, Hong Kong Railway Museum and Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery; a cross-disciplinary museum – Hong Kong Heritage Museum; Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre and Oil art space of the Art Promotion Office; and Hong Kong Film Archive.

The Hong Kong Museum of Art plays an important role in bringing to Hong Kong a multicultural vision of world art and culture through exhibition programmes with an international perspective. The Hong Kong Science Museum, with its predominantly interactive exhibits, illustrates various scientific principles and the ways technology is used to improve the quality of life. The Hong Kong Space Museum serves to popularise astronomy and space science. The Hong Kong Heritage Museum features a variety of specially designed exhibition possibilities to cover different aspects of history, arts and culture. The Hong Kong Museum of History collects, conserves, processes, studies and displays cultural objects which are closely related to the history and ethnography of Hong Kong and the South China area. The Hong Kong Film Archive’s major functions are to acquire, preserve, catalogue and document Hong Kong films and related materials. The Art Promotion Office is responsible for the promotion of public and community art in Hong Kong. The Intangible Cultural Heritage Office is responsible for the safeguarding, research and promotion of the intangible cultural heritage of Hong Kong.

The LCSD museums organise large-scale thematic exhibitions every year as well as year-round extension activities to raise interest and popularise museum services. Major exhibitions organised in 2019-20 included ‘A Sense of Place: from Turner to Hockney’, ‘The Road to Modernisation – 70 Years of the People’s Republic of China’, ‘Glistening Treasures in the Dust – Ancient Artefacts of Afghanistan’, ‘A History of the World in 100 Objects from the British Museum’, ‘The Story of Jao Tsung-i’, ‘Winter Games’ and ‘Unlocking the Secrets – The Science of Conservation at The Palace Museum’. The total attendance of museums in 2019-20 was about 3.67 million. As at March 2020, LCSD museums have acquired about 1 595 600 items of collection in which about 290 300 items are historic, art and science objects and about 1 305 300 items are film and film-related materials.

**Public Libraries**: With its 70 static libraries and 12 mobile libraries, the LCSD provides an accessible and efficient service to users in meeting community’s needs for knowledge, information, research, life-long learning, continuous education and profitable use of leisure time, and promotes reading and literary arts actively. Besides, it also manages the Books Registration Office which helps preserve Hong Kong’s literary heritage through the registration of local publications. The library system has a comprehensive collection of library materials which include over 13.29 million items of books and 1.82 million items of multimedia publications. It has over 4.68 million registered borrowers who borrowed more than 40.45 million items of books and other library materials during 2019-20. An array of activities for people of all ages are organised regularly throughout the year in promotion of culture, reading and knowledge dissemination. In 2019-20, over 19 490 extension activities programmes were held at the libraries. Hong Kong Central Library is the largest purpose-built public library in Hong Kong. Apart from being the hub of the public library network as well as the major information centre of Hong Kong, it also organises a diversity of cultural programmes for the general public.