

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 promotes conservation of nature and greening of Hong Kong 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, 43 swimming pool complexes, 41 gazetted bathing beaches, 96 sports centres, 81 turf pitches, 235 hard-surfaced mini-soccer pitches, 507 basketball courts, 256 tennis courts, 294 squash courts and 703 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 2015, the department organised some 38 000 recreation and sports activities for 2 537 300 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 2015, more than 1 500 programmes were organised for over 80 000 participants under the Campaign which included Exercise and Health Roving Exhibitions, Dance Night under Dance for Health, Quali-walk Scheme, Hiking Scheme, Rope Skipping Activities, Physical Fitness Test Day, Fitness Training Course for Children and Outreach Fitness Programmes for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly. To promote the campaign, 24 athletes were appointed as Healthy Exercise Ambassadors. 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 2015. 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 public free use 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 2015, the scheme provided subventions for NSAs and SOs to organise some 10 600 sports promotion events for about 732 700 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 2015, 8 138 activities were organised with over 611 500 students participating. Subsidies were granted for community sports clubs to organise about 2 350 sports development programmes for 51 000 participants.

Hong Kong Games: 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 Hong Kong Games (HKG) biennially from 2007 onwards. The 5th HKG was successfully held from April 25 to May 31, 2015 attracting over 3 200 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 430 000 people participated in related community participation activities of the 5th HKG.

Horticulture and Landscape Services: The LCSD is responsible for improving the environment with landscape planting, beautification schemes and tree preservation. It manages about 1 500 parks and gardens of various sizes, including 26 major parks throughout Hong Kong.

Since 2000, the LCS D has been holding the annual Hong Kong Flower Show at Victoria Park. The show is the biggest horticultural event of its kind in the territory. Besides numerous colourful landscape displays, flower arrangements and beautiful horticultural exhibits, the show has provided many other interesting fringe activities such as green activities workshops and seminars, cultural presentations as well as drawing and photographic competitions for the enjoyment of the public. The show was held at the same venue from March 20 to 29, 2015.

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 LCS D 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 established itself as 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 2 019-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 and 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 1 434-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. Officially re-opened on 17 July 2012, its facilities include a 300-seat Theatre and two Function Rooms.

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 local community spectrum.

Cultural Festivals and Performances: Cultural life of the citizens of Hong Kong is enriched by the year-round cultural and entertainment programmes organised by the LCS D. A number of internationally renowned visiting artists and groups were presented in 2015. Highlights included the Russian National Orchestra, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Singapore Chinese Orchestra making their Hong Kong debut, the Vienna Boys Choir, Ballet Flamenco Sara Baras, Sydney Dance Company and Australian Chamber Orchestra, iLuminate from the United States making their Hong Kong debut, and Li Liuyi Theatre Studio from the Mainland. Recitals by world-renowned musicians and groups including pianist Nelson Freire, violinist Itzhak Perlman, the duo formed by tenor Ian Bostridge and guitarist Yang Xuefei, Borodin Quartet and Hagen Quartet.

The LCS D also organised its sixth Chinese Opera Festival from June to August that featured a variety of operatic genre for promoting Chinese operatic art. It opened with shows by the Shanghai Peking Opera Troupe. Two large-scale community events, namely Dance Day and Cantonese Opera Day were held in March at Tuen Mun Town Hall and in November at Hong Kong Cultural Centre respectively. Meanwhile, the annual International Arts Carnival held in July and August provides children, teenagers and their families with fun-filled cultural programmes and interactive activities during summer. The carnival attracted nearly 137 000 participants in 2015 with a total of 414 stage performances and activities. Autumn came the World Cultures Festival – A Decade of Exquisite Arts, gathering artistic gems from around the globe to celebrate its 10th anniversary. More than 108 000 people participated in the festival's 80 performances and activities. In addition, territory-wide events for celebrating festive days include the Lantern Carnivals and Thematic Lantern Displays around the Mid-Autumn Festival and Lunar New Year, as well as the spectacular Community Thematic Carnivals.

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 1 137 arts education and audience

building activities were organised under these schemes in the same year, attracting more than 297 000 participants.

The annual Hong Kong Arts Festival, organised by the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society in February and March, has established itself as one of the most important international festivals in Asia featuring performances of music, dance, opera, theatre and entertainment of all kinds. The 2015 Festival comprised 137 ticketed performances and attracted about 160 000 people.

Music Office: The Music Office, managed by the LCSO, 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. It provides music training to more than 8 000 trainees each year and its activities attract about 170 000 participants annually.

URBTIX: Since its inception in 1984, URBTIX (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 around 40 outlets, and via internet, mobile app and telephone booking services. In 2015, over \$856,000,000 was paid through URBTIX for some 4 200 000 tickets for over 8 300 performances.

Other Performance Venues and Performing Companies in Hong Kong:

Hong Kong Arts Centre (HKAC) is entering its 39th year this coming October. It 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 HKAC was also appointed by the Urban Renewal Authority as the Main Operator of the Mallory Street project in Wan Chai, managing the "Comix Home Base" (CHB) under a five-year contract. CHB opened in July 2013 to promote the development of local cultural and creative industries. 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 2015, the academy enrolled 785 students for undergraduate and post-secondary programmes in its six performing arts disciplines, and attracted 133 students to

pursue master's degree programmes in dance, music, drama, film and television, and theatre and entertainment arts. It admitted more than 690 students to its junior programmes and over 3 400 students to its Extension and Continuing Education for Life programme.

Major Performing Arts Companies:

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.

The 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 many 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 LCSO endeavours in providing and developing museums and related services to collect historic, art and science objects and to preserve local cultural heritage and to promote public appreciation for it. Efforts are focused on preserving and conserving cultural

relics, antiquities and monuments and promoting heritage education to foster a sense of belonging among the people of Hong Kong.

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; two heritage centres – Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre and Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre; Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre and Oi! 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, the 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 LCSD museums organise large-scale thematic exhibitions every year as well as the year-round extension activities to raise interest and popularise museum services. Major exhibitions including 'The Past is Continuing', 'The Pride of Lingnan: In Commemoration of the 110th Birthday of Chao Shao-an', 'Walking in the Dreams', 'The Rise of the Celestial Empire: Consolidation and Cultural Exchange during the Han Dynasty', 'Western Scientific Instruments of the Qing Court', 'Out to Sea? The Plastic Garbage Project', 'Freeman Lau & Design: Inter-dependent Decisions', 'The Radiant Ming 1368-1644 through the Min Chiu Society Collection' and 'Wearable Blessings: Traditional Chinese Children's Clothing' were organised in 2015. The total attendance of museums in the year was about 4 860 000. As at 2015, LCSD museums have acquired about 1 480 000 items of collection in which about 280 000 items are historic, art and science objects and about 1 200 000 items are film and film-related materials.

The Antiquities and Monuments Office is responsible for the protection and preservation of Hong Kong's archaeological and built heritage. There are at present 111 declared monuments, most of which have been restored for public viewing. In addition, the office also monitors archaeological surveys and excavations necessitated by

public works projects or developments and assists the Development Bureau in implementing a partnership scheme to revitalise the historic buildings as well as a financial assistance scheme for maintenance of privately-owned graded historic buildings.

Public Libraries: With its 68 static libraries and 12 mobile libraries, the LCSD provides an accessible and efficient service to users in meeting community's needs for knowledge, information, and research, supports 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 12 340 000 items of books and 1 800 000 items of multi-media publications. It has 4 370 000 registered borrowers who borrowed more than 51 340 000 items of books and other library materials during the year of 2015. An array of activities for people of all ages are organised regularly throughout the year in promotion of culture, reading and knowledge dissemination. In 2015, a total of 21 461 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.