



## CIB NEWS ARTICLE

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### New Member Profile

## Hong Kong Housing Authority

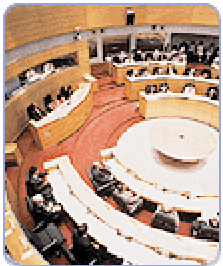


## Hong Kong Housing Authority

### Housing Authority

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) was established as a statutory body in April 1973 under the Housing Ordinance.

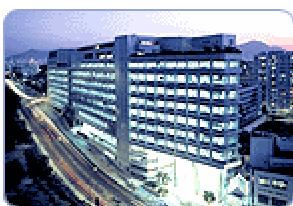
The mission of the HA is to provide subsidized public rental housing (PRH) to low-income families who cannot afford private rental accommodation. It also runs interim housing (IH) and transit centres to provide temporary housing to families facing short-term problems in finding suitable accommodation.



Following the Government's repositioned housing policy, in 2002 the HA withdrew from the provision of home ownership assistance schemes. It has also embarked on a programme to divest itself of the ownership of commercial facilities in PRH estates.

As of March 2006, the HA provided 648,200 PRH flats for 2,033,800 persons representing around 30% of Hong Kong's total population.

### Housing Department



The Housing Department (HD) acts as the executive arm of the HA in implementing its policies. The HD is headed by the Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and

Lands (Housing) who also assumes the office of the Director of Housing. He is supported by four Deputy Directors who are responsible for policy formulation and overseeing their implementation. As of December 2005, the HD had a strength of 9200 staff. In 2005/06, about 17,200 flats have been completed. As of March 2006, the average waiting time for housing was 2.0 years for all Waiting List applicants and 1.2 years for elderly single persons.

The vision of the Hong Kong Housing Department is:

- To help all families in need gain access to adequate and affordable housing.

The mission of the Hong Kong Housing Department is:

- To provide affordable quality housing, management, maintenance and other housing related services to meet the needs of our customers in a proactive and caring manner;
- To ensure cost-effective and rational use of public resources in service delivery and allocation of housing assistance in an open and equitable manner;
- To maintain a competent, dedicated and performance-oriented team.

The strategic objectives of the Housing Department are:

- To facilitate the cost-effective provision of quality PRH.
- To maximize the rational allocation and eliminate abuse of housing resources.
- To work in partnership with customers and other stakeholders to enhance service quality.
- To address the remaining issues of previous home ownership schemes.

- To manage and maintain our assets with a view to maximizing their economic life and contribution.
- To make effective use of the private sector in the delivery of housing and related services.
- To make the fullest use of human and financial resources and information technology to meet corporate goals.
- To contribute actively and positively towards sustainable development.
- To develop new and innovative business opportunities.

### Key activities of the Department

The following are the three key activities of the Housing Department:

1. Provision of Cost Effective Quality Housing
2. Promotion of a Healthy Living Environment in Caring Communities
3. Provision of a Services-oriented Management and Total Maintenance Service

Below follows a description of each activity.

#### Provision of Cost Effective Quality Housing

Following the Asian financial crisis in 1997, Hong Kong experienced an unforeseeable economic recession. The shrinkage in demand for housing and the reduced prices of private sector housing caused the Government to undertake a thorough review of its housing policy. In November 2002, the Government announced a revised Housing Policy which included the cessation of the production and sale of HOS flats in order to withdraw from the property market. This has immediately created a series of financial impacts on the HKHA. In developing our programme of activities, we must ensure cost-effective and rational use of resources to enhance economic sustainability. On this basis, we have implemented a number of measures including ,

#### Provision of Affordable Quality Housing

- Maintaining a functional and cost effective design approach in planning and construction.
- Implementing "micro climate" studies as a routine design and planning practice for all new public housing developments.
- Exploring the most effective use of precasting and prefabrication technologies from facades, staircases and floor slabs, to prefabricated bathrooms and kitchens, as well as structural walls.
- Developing comprehensive procurement practices for our contracts including effective list management systems and innovative procurement methods such as Guaranteed Maximum Price Contracting.

- Adopting a site oriented design approach as well as standard provisions and designs to ensure the most effective use of site potential, address customer needs and optimize cost effectiveness.



*Design of Domestic Towers*

#### Commercial Properties

The HA's commercial and non-domestic properties comprise 2.30 million square metres of internal floor area (IFA) of premises (including retail, welfare, kindergartens, flatted factories and others) and some 102,600 car parking spaces. In order to enable the HA to focus its resources on its core function as a provider of subsidized public housing and to meet the financial commitment for the public housing programme, the HA decided in July 2003, to divest itself of its retail and car parking facilities. The divestment took place through the launch of a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT), namely The Link REIT, at the end of November 2005.



*Commercial Centres*

### Rational Allocation of Public Housing Resources

- Streamlining the organization of the Department and making the best possible use of resources.
- Establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Review of Domestic Rent Policy to map out a rational rent adjustment mechanism.
- Formation of a Task Force against the abuse of public housing resources.

### Quality Control

- Enhancing buildability through collaboration with designers, contractors and various stakeholders within the industry.
- Adopting a partnership approach with our stakeholders to foster a common sense of purpose and a commitment to quality, safety and environmental protection.
- Constant updating and review of the HA Specification Library and contract conditions to cope with revised standards and to implement improvement and innovation in procurement practices, such as the Modified Guaranteed Maximum Price Contracting model, Pay for Safety and Environment, Voluntary Subcontractor Registration Scheme and Dispute Resolution Advisor System.
- Monitoring of the performance of contractors in building works as well as building services works, by the Performance Assessment Scoring System (PASS). The PASS scores indicate that the performance of contractors is continuously improving to maintain a high standard. ([www.housingauthority.gov.hk/en/businesspartners/buildingpass/0,,,00.html](http://www.housingauthority.gov.hk/en/businesspartners/buildingpass/0,,,00.html))

### Building Control – Independent Checking Unit

The Independent Checking Unit (ICU) is responsible for applying building control practices to HA projects and is directly responsible to the Permanent Secretary's Office of HD. The ICU was established in November 2000 as one of the HA Quality Housing Initiatives and has modeled its standards and practices on those of the Buildings Department. The unit is now engaged in all stages of the development of new HA projects from foundations to final completion, including demolition and site investigation where applicable. The ICU also exercises building control of the stock of HA existing buildings. Quality control is exercised through formal processes of plan approval, consent to commence work, monitoring of site operations and final inspections prior to completion and handover for occupation.

### Promotion of a Healthy Living Environment in Caring Communities

In providing homes for our residents, the HA promotes a healthy life-style and social cohesion in a caring community.

#### Environmental Policy

- Promotion of healthy living, green environment and sustainable development
- Continuing to explore various measures of energy-efficient design in our projects. Life Cycle Assessment and Life Cycle Costing studies have been used to study housing designs and the results indicates that life cycle performance is optimised.
- Promoting environmental awareness and the participation of our business partners and tenants.



*Estate Design*

#### Safety Policy

- Providing information on safety and health criteria for the public and key stakeholders involved in building and maintaining HA estates.
- Making safety and health performance a critical consideration in tender selection.
- Building up a safety profile of contractors for continuous assessment and monitoring contractor safety performance by independent and in-house assessment.
- Working through partnership by incorporating contractors' input in developing safe construction technology and equipment in HA contracts.

#### Design for healthy living

- Use of micro-climate studies and computational fluid dynamics techniques for the planning and

design of new estates, enhancing natural lighting and ventilation and promoting sustainable construction and green living practices.

- Partnering with local academia and consultants in studying innovative environmental processes such as visual sustainability, environmentally responsive facade designs, and thermal comfort in public spaces etc.

#### **Establishing a clean culture in public housing estates**

- Organizing Clean Neighbourhood Campaigns in PRH every year
- Introduction of a Marking Scheme on hygiene standards. Tenants committing contraventions will receive warnings which may eventually lead to termination of tenancies.

#### **Creating Caring Communities and Facilitating Social Sustainability**

- Establishment of the Estate Management Advisory Committee (EMAC) to increase tenants' participation in estate management.
- Conducting customer satisfaction surveys to gather feedback from residents.
- Enhancing community participation in estate planning and design by consultation with District Councils and concern groups
- Enhancing communication and building relationships with communities by a wide range of multi-media events, organization of corporate and community functions, workshops and educational activities.
- Preserving the heritage of a site and its neighbourhood through preservation of local characteristics such as existing trees, landscape and historical and cultural features.



*Estate Management and Promotion of a Caring Community*

#### **Provision of a Services-oriented Management and Total Maintenance Service**

We strive towards continuous improvement in our management and maintenance services for our tenants. To meet the rising expectations from our tenants, a new service-oriented scheme (Total Maintenance Scheme) is being developed featuring a proactive in-flat inspection and enhanced service to tenants' requests for repair.

#### **Proactive approach in the implementation of maintenance programmes**

- Establishment of "In-flat Inspection Ambassadors" under Total Maintenance Scheme to provide one-stop and proactive service for in-flat maintenance issues.
- Drawing up Estate Improvement Programmes for major maintenance works to sustain the aged public housing estates which are identified structurally safe.

#### **Prompt and positive approach in response to emergencies and tenants' requests for repairs**

- Setting up Maintenance Hotline to improve the efficiency in handling maintenance requests and complaints.
- Assignment of customer service coordinators to handle public and media enquires promptly and positively.
- Close monitoring of Property Service Agents and Maintenance Contractors to assure quality service.

#### **Enhanced promotional and educational programmes for tenants**

- Implementation of a comprehensive Publicity and Tenant Education Plan to educate tenants on proper use of fittings inside flats and public area, motivate tenants' participation in home caring and reporting defects.
- Conducting seminars for our professional and technical staff to instill the sense of quality and commitment to customer services, and require maintenance contractors to enhance their customer service.

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