

Surrounded by water . . . all 1,650 square kilometres of it

The Hong Kong Water Sports Council (HKWSC) was very pleased to see so many of its member federations joining the Water Safety Day of the Hong Kong Lifesaving Society (HKLSS) at Repulse Bay on the 1st of May 2017. Water safety is a key message which all water sports are keen to embed within the community, from the young to the elderly.

With its mission to facilitate the expansion of community participation in water sports, the HKWSC sees water safety as the central link connecting all activities and will welcome the opportunity to cooperate with the HKLSS in future safety awareness and training.

The Water Safety Day was one of the many events held to celebrate this year's 20th anniversary of the HKSAR. The anniversary also sees the change of government with a new chief executive taking office. This change takes place at a time when there is a strong focus on the use of Victoria Harbour for water sports and for the greater enjoyment of Hong Kong people.

The HKWSC has been working hard to establish new opportunities for water sports in line with newly-stated government policies in support of the further development of water sports, both in the harbour and elsewhere in suitable locations. In particular, because the activity area for water sports is on the water, the land component for a water sports centre can be significantly smaller on a per-person-user basis than other land-based sports.

Hong Kong's advantage is that it is surrounded by water, all 1,650 square kilometres of it. If opportunities are

provided to the community to utilise the water for sports and recreation, it can open up whole new activity areas for many people.

The concept of the harbour for the people is an excellent one. But harbour-side walks and sitting-out areas are not the whole solution. Of course, it is wonderful on a sunny day or pleasant evening to walk by the water or to sit and gaze out over the harbour, but this is only half the story.

Watching the water is one thing, but

watching activity on the water raises the level of interest significantly.

Watching dragon boats, canoes and other paddlers, rowing boats, sailing



Prizewinners at Water Safety Day (below) and promenade at Kwin Tong (middle).



boats and water skiers adds a whole new layer of interest to an expanse of water. Add to that, the people are actually sitting in these boats enjoying their exercise and their training, or competing against others, while maintaining a healthy

lifestyle and socialising through sports activities. All this without taking up road or pavement space, and being away from roadside traffic.

Water sports can bring a great deal of benefit to society as an important part of the wider sports community. Hong Kong has plenty of water to offer. It is hoped that the new administration will continue to promote and support this policy direction for the benefit of the community and towards a balanced provision of sports facilities throughout the territory. The HKWSC will work closely with government and other partners to demonstrate the possibilities and to activate the available opportunities.

