



The Association of Consulting Engineers of Hong Kong
香港顧問工程師協會

Newsletter Issue: November 2013

Welcoming Remarks by the Chairman at the Annual Dinner held on 18 November 2013



Secretary Paul Chan, honourable guests, members, ladies and gentlemen: Thank you for taking the time to attend the 36th Annual Dinner of ACE. Your presence graces this event!

Many people say that the Hong Kong construction industry has entered a golden era. The first time I heard about “a golden era” was at a function hosted by Mr. Thomas Ho, President of the HK Construction Association, a few years ago. Thomas is also sitting amongst us tonight. This is probably true when we look at the amount of money currently spent and will be spent on infrastructure projects. The yearly capital works expenditure is at all time high.

However, a golden era is not simply defined by the money spent but by the masterpieces it leaves behind. When the next generation looks back at this era, they will only care about the value which the new infrastructures have created. How the new infrastructures have improved the quality of their life? How the new infrastructures have made the place we call home more livable? Let’s take a look at some of the masterpieces left behind by our predecessors.

In the sixties when Hong Kong was suffering from a serious shortage of water, when water was only made available to consumers for four hours every four days, the Plover Cove Reservoir was built. Plover Cove was the world’s first impounding reservoir reclaimed from the sea. We made history here in Hong Kong, tamed the sea and provided new water for our people!

In the seventies, as Hong Kong continued to grow, when a journey from Chai Wan to Wan Chai took more than two hours during rush hours, the MTR was built and traffic congestion was greatly alleviated. Our MTR rivals the best subway system in the world: Reliable, Clean, Safe, and Fare Reasonable!

In the eighties when the old Kai Tak airport was overloaded and posed a constraint to the further development of Hong Kong, the Chek Lap Kok airport was conceptualized and put into service in July 1997. Our new airport has since been constantly rated by travelers as one of the most user friendly airports in the world. It has helped retain Hong Kong’s position as a leading international business hub.

Fast forward to our new millennium, scarcity of land in Hong Kong is becoming more and more of a constraint to development and we are more and more aware of the impact on the environment. Building Hong Kong’s first cavern service reservoir at the University of Hong Kong not only freed up land for development of the University Centennial campus, we preserved a mountain side, trees and nature as a result.

I am proud to say that the consulting engineers of Hong Kong have taken active roles in all of these landmark projects, which have built a world of difference in Hong Kong. Looking ahead, our members certainly aspire to continue with the legacy of innovation and creativity. But there needs to be right ingredients in the market place to promote our aspirations.



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This year, the Development Bureau proposed to modify the mechanism for the selection of consultants with a view to promoting innovation and creativity – to better ensure we create a golden era of engineering excellence. ACE embraces the goal of steering the industry towards innovation and creativity. In this respect, we are on the same page with the Development Bureau.

However, there is a difference in opinion on some of the means to achieve the goals. ACE believes that the Government should provide incentives for consultants to contemplate innovative solutions. It is because there is still a strong don't-rock-the boat culture amongst stakeholders. Implementation of an innovative solution requires significantly more inputs than the implementation of a proven solution. There needs to be a mechanism in place to fairly compensate consultants for the additional inputs.

Having different opinions on a subject matter is just very natural. The key is to listen and resolve difference in opinions in a rational manner. Ladies and gentlemen, I will like to commend Mr. C S Wai and his team because they are really open-minded. They listen and respect different opinion. In particular, Mr Wai and his team are committed to make things happen. I have received phone calls late at night and on Sunday morning from colleagues in the Development Bureau, asking me to clarify our comments on individual initiatives. So, ladies and gentlemen, not only consultants work long hours, I can testify that senior civil servants these days work round the clock as well.

We all know that the civil society today is much more polarized than what it used to be. As consultants, it is not good enough just to engineer a good solution. We have to support our clients to engage the public and sell the solution. Only when a solution is accepted by the general public will good design on paper materialize into physical works. .

I am pleased to report that ACE is taking an active role in engaging the public. Last Monday, I represented ACE to express our view on the Long term housing strategy to a Legco Housing Sub-committee [*You can see the script of my oral presentation in the ACEHK website: www.acehk.org.hk*]. I voiced our support for reclamation as one of the means to provide lands for housing development. In fact, reclamation does not only produce land to support the growth of Hong Kong. It also allows suitable construction waste to be recycled and reused. Reclamation is a sustainable solution if appropriate sites are selected and engineering and construction are carried out properly. We urged Legco and the Government to quickly commit to reclamation outside Victoria Harbour.

Our view was well received by all those present at the Legco Sub-committee meeting, including the Honourable Mr. Long Hair, who endorsed our view and spoke in favour of reclamation outside Victoria Harbour.

To sum up, we, at ACE, will continue to strive for a golden era of engineering excellence, and do what is necessary to support Secretary Paul Chan to engineer a Better Hong Kong for the People of Hong Kong. Thank you!



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Overview of the Work undertaken by the Council in Session 2012/2013

On commencement of the Council Session 2012/2013, the Council has set THREE goals. We would like to give a summary of the tasks accomplished in the Session 2012/2013.

Goal #1: Values to Members

- (1) Improving communication: A total of THREE issues of the Newsletter were published.
- (2) Meeting the clients – To add values to our Members, we have invited Members to join lunch meetings to exchange views with some key stakeholders in the delivery of engineering projects in Hong Kong. In the Session 2012/2013, we have invited Dr M W Chan, Executive Director of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCD) and Ir C K Hon, Director of Civil Engineering Development Department (CEDD) as guest speakers.
- (3) Creating a knowledge-enriching culture - We held seminars on some interesting subjects. These include: NEC Professional Services Contract (PSC), Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment (CEEQUAL) and Professional Indemnity (PI) Insurance. We have invited distinguished guests to deliver the seminars and sit in the Panel Discussion and the events were successful. There was a lively exchange of views in the Panel Discussions which were well attended with senior representatives from a range of our Members.

Goal #2: Proactive to new Government Policies/Initiatives

Among the initiatives that we have reported in the last issue of the Newsletter, we are pleased to report that there were good progress made in NEC Professional Services Contract, Strict Language in Consultancy Brief, Streamlining of Consultancy Procurement Procedures and Revision of the Method of Assessment of Fee Proposals to Enhance the Healthy Development of the Consulting Industry. The Council also works closely with Development Bureau on business prospecting, e.g. pushing for the acceptance of the qualifications of engineering consultants in Hong Kong by the Qianhai Authority.

The Association has sought consent from the Ministry of Commerce (MOCComm) who approved the eligibility of our Members and would send invitation to our Members requesting for submission of tenders for provision of site supervision services on projects funded by the Chinese Government in various Asian countries, including Cambodia, Laos, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. This would be a breakthrough for Hong Kong engineering consultants to sign up agreement directly with the Chinese Government.

In the Session 2012/2013, Council sought views and invited Members' active participation in the internal consultations on new Government procurement policies/initiatives. These include:

- assessment of Consultant's proposals in response to low bids .
- binding of Technical Proposals
- streamlining of Consultancy Procurement Procedures
- simplified one-stage selection of Consultants for selected projects
- innovation and creativity.



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Goal #3: Raising our profile

The Association has been invited to sit on a number of external Committees. These include:

- Consulting Engineering Committee (CEC) - DevB
- Task Force on Selection of Consultants - CIC
- Review Panel under Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance – HyD
- Focus Group on Projected Construction Expenditure - CIC
- 2013 Mainland & Hong Kong Construction Industry Forum Organizing Committee – DevB
- Steering Committee on Construction Industry Council Manpower Forecasting (CICMF) Model Updating and Enhancement Study - CIC
- Working Group for Human Factor Analysis (in Construction Safety) - DevB

Annual General Meeting

Please note that the Annual General Meeting of the Session 2012/2013 is scheduled on 26 November 2013 at 6 pm at the Victoria Suite, Hong Kong Club. Your presence would mean a great support to us. Please mark it on your diary and we look forward to seeing you on the 26th November 2013.

Further enquiries

You could reach the Chairman or any Council Members by phone and/or email. Contact information could be accessed from http://www.acehk.org.hk/council_2012.html