



中國香港賽艇協會

HONG KONG, CHINA ROWING ASSOCIATION

Report of the Chairman to the Annual General Meeting of the Hong Kong, China Rowing Association 3rd December, 2017

For the year 2017, while the Association has continued with many development initiatives, coastal rowing has come to define the year in terms of importance for the future. In October, we were immensely proud to sign an Event Agreement with FISA at the 2017 FISA Ordinary Congress in Sarasota-Bradenton, USA, to organise and host the 2019 World Rowing Coastal Championships. This will be the biggest event ever organised by the Association and will need support from many of our clubs and rowers to reach the high standards of organisation and presentation expected by ourselves and by FISA. We are confident that we have dedicated and experienced people and that this can be a milestone for rowing in Hong Kong, for the Association and for Hong Kong itself.

Coastal rowing also made the headlines when the RHKYC organised, in conjunction with the Association, a Harbour Regatta in March. Based at the Yacht Club's premises in Causeway Bay, the race was an out and back 600m course and attracted a broad range of competitors. It was the first time in over 50 years that competitive rowing had returned to the harbour. There are plans to make this an annual event as part of a larger community-focussed development plan for coastal rowing. For this purpose, the Association is in the process of acquiring 16 coastal rowing boats for community development.

The Association was also again a co-organiser with the RHKYC for the 2017 Around the Island Race (ATIR), held just last week. This year's event attracted some top international crews from around the world and the vision of the organisers is that the ATIR should become an iconic world coastal challenge, putting Hong Kong on the map as an annual destination in world rowing terms. This year the rowing events started and finished in the harbour, in line with the planned profile and status of this event in the future.

As part of our vision for the 2019 WRCC, we will design a wide ranging community development programme based around coastal rowing. The Coastal Rowing Committee is now in the process of developing this plan. We have also been awarded hosting rights for the 2018 Asian Rowing Coastal Championships by ARF and we will organise this as a test event for 2019 on the same proposed harbour race course.

The focus on the harbour in many of our coastal activities is in part a response to the Chief Executive's Policy Agenda, to promote the use of the harbour and to promote Hong Kong as a venue for international sport. It is also logical to make much greater use of Hong Kong's vast expanse of coastal waters for sport and recreation, using minimal land resources and maximising activity programmes using the water. In this respect we will also be seeking opportunities to engage with new partners to encourage them to participate in coastal rowing wherever suitable facilities exist.

With an abundance of opportunities in Hong Kong for community development of rowing, increasing further with the introduction of coastal rowing and new venues, the Association has developed a strategic plan, together with new Vision and Mission statements, to ensure that we have an integrated approach to our work. The plan has been several years in the making but will be published shortly. It will of course continue to be updated as necessary and will form the basis of the work of all our

Committees and Commissions, giving a broad understanding to all involved of how the different areas and activities of the Association tie in with, and impact on, other areas. I appreciate very much the work done by individuals, previously Amy Tung and now Vick Yeung, to bring us to this stage and also to all the Committees and Commissions who have contributed and will be central to implementing the plan.



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The successful implementation and follow-up of the plan will be important steps in bringing more structure to our activities.

I spoke about the need for development of partnerships in relation to coastal rowing development. This continues to be an important part of our strategy in all areas. At the very top, clubs should be seen as the activity centres of our sport and are much more than partners. They are core members of the Association and are key ambassadors for the Association and for promotion of rowing in the community. But competitions and events in indoor rowing are now initiated by a growing number of organizations with little or no input from the Association and this is a good direction. Multiple partners organizing their own rowing events without relying on the Association's resources are the key to unlimited expansion of rowing and our efforts need to be in this direction. This would leave the Association with the more usual role of an NSA – managing the sport and overseeing at a high level the development initiatives and future directions. Partner organisations should fill an important gap in development activities.

The success of the strategic plan will very much depend on the effective working of our Committees and Commissions. Since these groups have been established as part of our governance structure, Committees and Commissions have continued to develop their role. Whilst not all are, as yet, as fully effective as they might be, they are nonetheless important to the future of the Association, broadening our base of rower involvement and providing opportunities for potential future leaders to participate in the management of rowing and of the Association.

The STRC Extension Project has continued to be held in abeyance. Our most recent discussions with the Hong Kong Jockey Club have been more positive than we had expected however and we understand that there is still an opportunity to proceed with this project. The next steps lie with the Association and we are now planning to organize a BIG ROW Day, tentatively scheduled for 1st May 2018 with a number of objectives – (1) is to raise money towards the STRC extension; (2) is to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Association by bringing as many past and present rowers as possible back to the Shing Mun River, putting all of our boats on the water; and (3) to try to reconnect with as many past rowers as possible. We hope, through this event, to demonstrate to the HKJC our commitment and ability to see through the project. Sam Wong has agreed to head up the organizing committee and we encourage all of you to enter into the spirit of this event. More details will soon be provided.

Regarding the Kai Tak and Tseung Kwan O proposals under our membership of the Hong Kong Water Sports Council – there has been progress on paper for both projects but not yet any concrete outcomes. The HKWSC is still awaiting the allocation of the Short Term Tenancy for the temporary facility at Kai Tak. We have also participated in the planning objection lodged against the rezoning of the site proposed by HKWSC for the permanent centre at Kai Tak. The hearing will be in the coming week and we are hopeful that we can help the Town Planning Board members and concerned government departments understand the vision for the Kai Tak Approach Channel and surrounding water / land interface and the world class opportunities this can offer for Hong Kong and Kai Tak, not only for sports but as a multi-purpose water-based arena.

In 2017, indoor rowing took to the world stage when it was included as a very successful invitation sport in The World Games in Poland. This has led to FISA establishing a pathway, initially together with Concept 2, to an official annual World Rowing Indoor Championships, the first of which will be held in USA in February 2018. This is likely to raise the profile of indoor rowing internationally and nationally in many countries. We will continue to promote indoor rowing here both as a gateway to water rowing and as a sport in itself. You will see targets and direction in the strategic plan. I believe our own indoor rowing programme and indoor rowing championships can grow significantly. I would



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also like to recognise the work of Sam Wong, our Coaching Director, for his efforts to produce an 'Indoor Rowing Instructor' coaching video which will provide online training for aspiring instructors and will greatly expand our reach in indoor rowing.

We have held a full schedule of competitions this year, including again the International Masters Regatta. The format and structure of the annual competition calendar needs ongoing review to ensure that we are making the best use of the available days and that the events are properly serving the development needs of the Association and our clubs. With masters rowing playing a bigger role in Asia, we also need to review carefully the balance of excellence and participation at our Hong Kong Rowing Championships. The Events Commission will be asked to consider these and other events issues.

The Board agreed this year to establish a Finance Sub-Committee to look at our long-term financial planning and the sustainability of our activities and of the Association. This will be even more important as rowing activities spread out to other new venues so that the Association can continue to develop new bases of activity and bring new rowers to our sport from all sectors of the community with confidence that we have a financial model which will support unlimited expansion.

At the international level, the Hong Kong Rowing Team had another successful season. At the Sydney International Regatta (Australian Open Championships) in March, Hong Kong won 2 gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze medals. This was followed by 1 gold and 2 silver medals at the Japan Lightweight Championships in May, and 4 second and 2 third places at the Holland Beker (Dutch Open Regatta) in June. Crews also performed creditably at the FISA World Cup regattas in Poznan and Lucerne and at the World U-23 Championships in Plovdiv.

At the Asian Championships in Thailand, an important precursor to the 2018 Asian Games, Tang Chiu Mang and Leung Chun Shek took gold in the lightweight men's double sculls and Lee Ka Man silver in the women's lightweight single sculls. Silver medals were also won in the men's pair, men's lightweight quadruple sculls, and men's lightweight four.

We were represented at the World Championships in Sarasota in the women's lightweight single sculls and the men's lightweight quadruple sculls, finishing 11th and 14th respectively.

Finally, at the Asian Junior Championships in Thailand, the junior women's pair of Cheng Cheuk Kwan and Lee Mei Po won a silver medal in their event, and junior men's sculler Wong Wai Chun finished 4th in a very strong field of 21 scullers to secure a qualifying place for the 2018 Buenos Aires Youth Olympic Games. This is the first time that Hong Kong has qualified a crew for this event.

I was also very encouraged to note that over 98% of registered squad members - senior, junior and potential - participated in the Hong Kong Rowing Championships this year accounting for nearly 30% of the total number of athletes (including both local and overseas) racing in the open events. The squad athletes all raced in the colours of their respective clubs and they were joined by a number of ex-squad rowers. And of the 30 medals awarded in the open events, 15 were won by crews containing one or more squad rowers. These are interesting statistics and indicate clearly the high level of support given by our Hong Kong rowers to our annual championships, even though they do not appear in Hong Kong uniforms.

I have mentioned in my election statement the need for us to review our Youth Development Programme. This programme has historically been the primary feeder system of our future squad rowers and we need to ensure that it continues to be highly effective in this regard. The YDP also serves as the face of rowing in schools and the reputation of our sport with teachers and students alike will be influenced



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greatly by their experience with these activities. I hope we can make this review early in the new year to find ways to expand and upgrade this important programme. This can also build on the already strong entries in the two annual regional Hong Kong Schools Sports Federation Indoor Rowing Championships, already an official event under HKSSF. We have also taken the decision, following the recent 2017 Hong Kong Schools Rowing Championships which attracted entries from around 90 schools, to submit an application for recognition by HKSSF for water rowing as an official school sport. We will work closely with HKSSF to achieve this aim, which should facilitate a significant growth in school rowing.

The coming years 2018 and 2019 will continue to be very busy, even more so with the Asian and World Rowing Coastal Championships. These two events will certainly be significant challenges for the Association but they are also very big opportunities. They will need the support of many people and I hope that a large number of our clubs will also enter crews in both events.

Thank you to outgoing Directors Kenneth Leung, Martin Reynolds and Liz Wray. We are always looking for dedicated volunteers at all levels of the Association and the personal commitment of our elected Directors is greatly appreciated. In this regard it is reassuring to see that we have more candidates than available posts for election of Directors this year. I believe this is healthy for the Association. Thank you Kenneth, Martin and Liz for your contribution to the Association during your time as Directors and we hope to continue to be able to call on your expertise and advice in future.

On behalf of the Association I would also like to thank the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, as well as the Home Affairs Bureau, the Leisure & Cultural Services Department and the Marine Department of Hong Kong SAR Government for their support during this past year. I would also like to reaffirm our close and cooperative relationship with the Hong Kong Sports Institute.

Thank you to our staff, led by Executive Director Annie Lam, for all their hard work over this year. Our staff members face many challenges and a heavy workload and we rely heavily on them. Thank you.

My sincere thanks to our Directors and to all Committee and Commission members for your invaluable contribution to the Association and to rowing.

And thank you to all present for your support to the Association.

Mike Tanner
Chairman
Hong Kong, China Rowing Association