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Shaping a Spirit of
Community

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Shaping a Spirit of Community



The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has inherited a strong tradition of estate management and service which has helped provide comfortable homes for different generations of public rental housing (PRH) population over the years. But with society and technology continuing to change and new challenges constantly arising, we are also building for the future through constant innovations and planning. The result we are aiming for is a dynamic mix of the best of old and new.

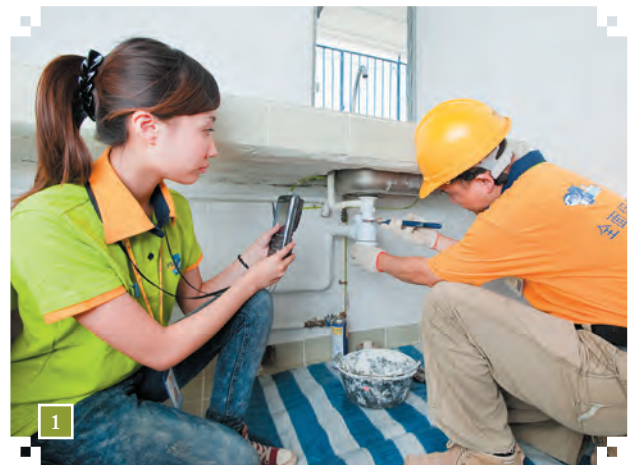
Quality living programmes

We are partway through the current (2011–2016) cycle of our Total Maintenance Scheme (TMS), which across its five-year cycle provides comprehensive maintenance to all PRH estates. In 2013/14, TMS was applied to 39 estates, and this year an extra focus on building safety was built into the scheme following new building control initiatives introduced by the Government. Closely linked with TMS is our Responsive In-flat Maintenance Service (RIMS), which has been expanded from last year and now covers 210 estates and courts, including five new estates. RIMS gives front line staff the resources to respond promptly to maintenance requests, helping stop minor problems from worsening.

Other quality living programmes that continued in operation during the year were our Comprehensive Structural Investigation Programme (CSIP) and Estate Improvement Programme (EIP). The former checks older estates for structural integrity and makes recommendations on revitalisation or redevelopment. The latter is applied to older estates given a good structural “bill of health” by CSIP, improving their conditions and facilities.

Maintenance for Sustainability

To gauge the sustainability of different block types and help us develop a long-term maintenance and improvement strategy for our PRH estates, six pilot estates (with 40 public rental housing blocks) were enrolled in the Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency (HKQAA) Sustainable Building Index (SBI) Scheme during the year, and gained the HKQAA SBI Verified Mark. The Housing Department (HD) is the first organisation to obtain the Verified Mark. By the end of 2014/15, 10 estates, comprising around 80 housing blocks which represent the majority of the HA’s block designs, will be enrolled in the SBI Scheme.



- 1 The Monitoring Team of TMS keeps track of the maintenance work.
- 2 Lek Yuen Estate is one of the PRH estates benefiting from the Lift Addition Programme.

To enhance our auditing and risk management of maintenance and improvement (M&I) works in PRH estates, we have adopted the principles of the ISO 19011 Auditing Management System and applied ISO 31000 Risk Management Framework to our existing Quality Management System for M&I works. Verification Statements for ISO 19011 and ISO 31000 were obtained from the HKQAA in September 2013.

The HA also implemented a Preferential Tender Award System (PTAS) for evaluating tenders submitted for Building Maintenance District Term Contracts tendered out from October 2013 onwards. Besides price, the evaluation also takes into account a contractor's past performance and track record. The purpose of implementing PTAS is to ensure the HA engages high quality contractors, and to encourage contractors to strive for continuous improvement.



Making PRH barrier-free

Our efforts to make PRH estates accessible for all ages and abilities continued during 2013/14. We completed our Stage 1 Lift Addition Programme, which brought four new lifts to older estate environments in 2013/14. In total, 35 separate projects have been completed since the programme was launched in 2008, involving a total of 70 lifts. In early 2013 we launched the Stage 2 Lift Addition Programme, which involved adding lifts to connect elevated platforms in external areas, and alongside existing footbridges in PRH estates. As for existing lifts, under our Lift Modernisation Programme, we continued to inspect and assess all lifts over 25 years of age. In 2013/14, a total of 103 old lifts in 16 estates were replaced under the programme. At the same time, where structure allowed, new lift openings were added on floors not previously served by lifts.

Alongside these lift initiatives, we continued to work on our comprehensive barrier-free access improvement programme across all PRH estates in Hong Kong. This six-year programme, launched in 2010/11 with a budget of HK\$330 million, is in line with the Government's barrier-free policy and involves upgrading lifts, improving walkways, adding handrails and tactile warning strips for better accessibility, along with other improvements. By the end of 2013/14, most of the improvement works had been completed. To strike a balance between moving the improvement works forward and avoiding service interruptions and nuisance to tenants, a small proportion of the improvement works are being tied in with the Lift Modernisation Programme, and will be completed by 2016/17.

Keeping estates safe and secure

The PRH Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Security System is an important tool for safeguarding the general security of our PRH residents. In 2013/14, we continued with the final phase of our large-scale project of upgrading our estate-wide CCTV surveillance system with colour cameras, digital video recorders and broadband network transmission. The entire project was successfully completed by the end of the year, at which point 1 016 blocks in 153 estates across Hong Kong had been upgraded.

During the year, we also launched a new programme to replace the electrical wiring in both the HA's PRH flats and the PRH flats of Tenants Purchase Scheme Estates built in the period 1986-1992. The programme also involved upgrading the safety standards of the wiring installation, and increasing the number of electrical sockets in each flat. Wiring replacement is important as it both improves in-flat safety and reduces fire risks for residents.

Fire Safety

Fire safety and fire prevention are top priorities in our estate management work. We address these by providing regular education and drills in PRH estates, and by encouraging fire safety promotional activities delivered by other parties. Our annual fire safety campaign keeps residents updated with fire safety information and raises their awareness of fire risks. Residents are encouraged to take part in the fire drill organised for every domestic block at least once every two years. The well-received annual fire safety quiz was again organised across all our PRH estates, for the ninth consecutive year. Other means used for disseminating the fire safety message included regular video broadcasts on the Housing Channel, messages on local radio channels, and the estate fire safety mini site at the HA/HD Website.

As always, the Fire Services Department (FSD) has been a valued collaborator. In 2013/14, the FSD once again sent its Mobile Publicity Unit and Fire Safety Education Bus to PRH estates across the territory, making around 90 visits during the year. It also continued to offer training to PRH residents who expressed interest in becoming Fire Safety Ambassadors and Trainers.



Marking Scheme

The HA's Marking Scheme for Estate Management Enforcement in Public Housing Estates encourages PRH tenants to care for their community, and helps to maintain a safe and hygienic living environment for all. Utilising warnings and the allotment of points to deter hygienic-related misdeeds and reckless misconduct in public housing estates, the Marking Scheme supplements our education and publicity programmes encouraging residents to keep their communities clean and safe. It has proven effective in setting good standards of community behaviour in terms of safety and hygiene, and is widely supported by residents. The Marking Scheme covers 28 misdeed items, categorised by the severity of their impact on environmental hygiene and estate management, which attract the allotment of 3, 5, 7 or 15 points accordingly. Households with valid points are debarred from transfer, while accumulating 16 points or above within 24 months can lead to termination of tenancy.

Green living

The ISO 14001 Environmental Management System (EMS) for planned maintenance and improvement works has been implemented in all PRH estates since May 2011. In recent years, we have developed a comprehensive EMS for property management in accordance with ISO 14001 standards; this has now been implemented. ISO certification for all existing PRH estates was gained in July 2013. From now on EMS will be implemented at all new estates for attaining ISO 14001 certification once they have reached occupancy rates of between 80% and 90%.

As part of a 42-month programme to reduce energy consumption across our PRH estates that will be completed in 2015/16, during the year we replaced existing electromagnetic ballast with energy-saving electronic ballast for light fittings in 280 existing domestic blocks. In addition, as a pilot project, we extended the use of lower-energy LED light fittings in one of the domestic blocks at Kai Tak Site 1A (i.e. Kai Ching Estate). The first intake at this estate took place in August 2013, and we are now evaluating the performance of the lighting in this estate.

Elsewhere, we successfully obtained ISO 50001 Energy Management System Certification for our pilot project, Kwai Shing West Estate, in June 2013. Based on that experience, we are now extending its implementation to cover all PRH estates in two phases. Phase One, comprising 92 PRH estates, is scheduled to obtain certification by October 2014, and the remaining 75 PRH estates in Phase Two are scheduled for April 2015.

We continued with our effective Source Separation of Domestic Waste Programme during the year, collecting some 29 390 tonnes of waste paper, 1 810 tonnes of plastic bottles, and 1 360 tonnes of aluminium for recycling.

 We collaborate with the FSD to organise activities for disseminating fire safety messages to the younger generation at PRH.

Shaping a Spirit of Community

Greening the environment

Our efforts to green PRH estates come from a recognition that not only does greening provide our tenants with a healthy and sustainable living environment, it also brings enhanced environmental benefits by improving thermal insulation and reducing heat radiation and glare. Furthermore, greening has strong visual and aesthetic values.

Some of our older estates have little land on which to develop greening initiatives at ground level, so in recent years we have explored the options of creating green roofs at many sites. This has required us to overcome constraints in structural loading, drainage, waterproofing and accessibility. To date, we have added 15 green roofs to the covered walkways, carparks and ancillary facilities blocks in five PRH estates, as well as at our HA Headquarters. These green roofs are equipped with automatic irrigation systems and planted with a variety of plants requiring low maintenance. The plants provide a pleasant sight for residents overlooking the roofs.

Based on the success of the green roofs to date, we have committed ourselves to retrofitting more green roofs at existing estates as opportunities arise.

Enhanced greening was carried out at 18 estates to improve green coverage and the health of the plant stock. At 10 other estates, tree planting days were held to enrich their tree cover. Thematic gardens were introduced at Lee On and Shun On Estates as focal points of their open communal spaces. To foster a green mindset in residents, we organised group greening activities at 20 estates during the year in collaboration with Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMACs). Training courses were once again offered to members of our 650-strong volunteer team of Estate Tree Ambassadors, to assist them in their role of promoting respect and care for trees on estates.



Partnering with EMAC for better estate management

EMACs play an important intermediary role between local estate management and PRH tenants. They are involved in daily management and minor improvement works, and also supervise and appraise the service contractors.

Our biennial EMAC Seminar was held on 22 March 2014. This major event acted as a platform by which EMAC members and HD staff could exchange views on estate management matters. It also provided an opportunity to reflect on a significant anniversary: 60 years of public housing development in Hong Kong. Officiating at the seminar was Professor Anthony Cheung Bing-leung, Chairman of the HA, and the event was also attended by senior management of the Department as well as about 700 EMAC members from all public housing estates. Some participants shared their experiences relating to the evolution of estate management and EMACs over the past 60 years. Among other highlights, prizes were presented to the 18 winning teams of the EMAC Award Scheme on Promotion of Fire Safety.

Funds are available for EMACs to partner with various NGOs in activities to strengthen the sense of community on PRH estates. In 2013/14, some 416 of these partnering functions were held, in the form of seminars, workshops, shows and carnivals. In partnership with three green groups, we also continued to run our popular Green Delight in Estates programme. A series of promotional activities was held based on this year's theme "Reduction of Municipal Solid Waste", including a green recipe competition, fun days, talks, workshops and visits. In addition, we introduced pilot schemes for food waste recycling at 14 estates.

Contractor collaboration

We work closely with our contractors at every level, with seminars and meetings conducted as and when required. In May 2013, for instance, we organised a seminar for services contractors on preventing Avian Influenza (H7N9) in our PRH estates, which included demonstrations on disinfecting and disposing of wounded, sick and dead birds.

In terms of site safety, we held our seventh annual Site Safety Forum 2013 for Works Contracts and Property Services Contracts in June 2013 in collaboration with the Occupational Safety and Health Council. We also held our second Occupational Safety Forum for Cleansing Services in March 2014 for our frontline cleansing workers and cleansing services contractors.

Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series (OHSAS) 18001 is an international occupational health and safety management specification that helps minimise risks and reduce accidents among employees. In a longer-term move to raise health and safety standards among cleansing workers, from October 2013 we made it a requirement that contractors wishing to be included in the HA's List of Cleansing Service Contractors and Property Services Agents should possess OHSAS 18001 accreditation relating to the provision of cleaning services. Existing contractors have been given an 18-month grace period to achieve full compliance.



Reducing landfill waste: replanting CNY citrus plants

At the time of the Lunar New Year, it is a Chinese tradition to decorate homes with potted citrus plants and festive flowers. The citrus plants with their delightful golden fruit add a wonderful festive atmosphere, but after the festival most of them are simply thrown away. Last year, in an initiative to reduce the amount of waste ending up as yard fill, the HA rolled out a pilot scheme to collect and replant citrus plants for the reason that they are perennials and comparatively easy to replant.

Participants from 35 estates and 1 shopping centre voluntarily joined the scheme, and together they collected over 1 000 citrus plants. To give volunteers the necessary replanting skills, we arranged talks on planting techniques and also distributed an information sheet about different stages of plant development and the horticultural action required. Follow-up visits by members of our horticulture team were arranged to provide on-site advice and technical support.

Over 700 pots of citrus plants were successfully replanted under the pilot scheme. In recognition of the efforts put in by the participants, we organised an award presentation ceremony which included awards in a number of different categories, including awards for the Citrus Plant Bearing the Largest Number of Fruits, the Citrus Plant Bearing the Biggest Fruit, and the Grand Prize: the Best of the Best King Tangerine Award. Celebrities were also invited to demonstrate what could be done with the citrus fruit, such as making jam or preparing salted tangerines.

The scheme was widely reported in the media as a fine example of reducing yard waste in estate management in Hong Kong, and was also acknowledged by the Government and included in the Food Waste & Yard Waste Plan for Hong Kong 2014-2022 issued by the Environment Bureau. Following its success, the pilot scheme has been extended to all PRH estates in Hong Kong in an effort to further reduce yard waste; in 2014 alone, more than 5 000 pots of citrus plants have been collected. This popular initiative has been successful both in reducing landfill, and in boosting the green awareness of PRH residents across Hong Kong by giving them the opportunity to appreciate and observe the life cycle of plants.





Improved accessibility: Stage 1 Lift Addition Programme

Some of the PRH blocks built in the 1970s and earlier had no lift services. Furthermore, many older PRH estates were built on steep hillsides, with only staircases connecting different platforms within the estate or the vicinity. Today there are high social expectations for barrier-free environments, partly as a result of Hong Kong's ageing population. We have therefore been undertaking much needed improvements to pedestrian access by adding extra lifts or escalators, with a special view to providing barrier-free access for the disabled and the elderly, and enhancing connectivity within and between estates.

Stage 1 of our Lift Addition Programme (LAP) was launched in 2008. This involved adding new lift towers to existing PRH blocks that lacked lift services, as well as new lifts, escalators and installing footbridges in external areas. LAP has resulted in a huge enhancement of pedestrian accessibility in the 29 PRH estates that were prioritised under the programme, with 70 lifts, 6 escalators and 18 footbridges having been completed by December 2013.

Implementing Stage 1 of LAP in existing communities posed challenges in design and construction due to significant site constraints, which included high pedestrian flows, limited working space, congested underground utilities and many geotechnical complexities. Our dedicated project teams addressed these issues with care and sensitivity, adopting new initiatives and technologies such as prefabricated steel lift shafts and machine-room-less lift installations. They successfully overcame the drawbacks of traditional construction and installation methods, reducing construction nuisance, shortening the construction period and enhancing the energy efficiency of the lift service.

When working on Stage 1 of LAP, we took the opportunity to enhance estate environments by integrating landscape improvement work with our lift addition work. Examples include the courtyard improvement work that was carried out in the Lek Yuen Estate project, and the provision of a water feature in the Ping Tin Estate project, both of which blended better accessibility with a more pleasant living environment.

Communication with and co-operation from residents were keys to the success of Stage 1 of LAP. We consulted with residents at EMAC meetings as early as possible during the design stage to ensure the projects met their needs, and as a result, the projects were enthusiastically welcomed.

- 1 The Chairman of HA's Subsidised Housing Committee, Mr Stanley Wong (second from right), and the then Director of Housing, Mr D W Pescod (second from left), demonstrate what could be done with the citrus fruit.
- 2 The Grand Prize: the Best of the Best King Tangerine Award.
- 3 Residents of Lai Yiu Estate benefit from LAP.