

## Sydney HKETO showcases Hong Kong's culture and diversity at Auckland Lantern Festival (with photos)

To celebrate the Chinese New Year with members of the public in New Zealand, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Sydney (HKETO) again participated in the Auckland Lantern Festival, which this year took place from February 14 to 17 (Auckland time) at Auckland Domain.

Eight giant pillar lanterns displayed beautiful photos of Hong Kong to showcase the city's unique culture and diversity. The HKETO also erected a marquee with a design based on Hong Kong's magnificent skyline and distributed information leaflets about the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, Hong Kong's talent admission schemes and the Basic Law. Souvenirs promoting Hong Kong green living and Hong Kong characteristics were also well received by the public.

The Auckland Lantern Festival is one of the largest lantern festivals outside Asia, with hundreds of handmade Chinese lanterns, music and dance performances, martial arts demonstrations and traditional Chinese arts and crafts.

Speaking at a reception for the Auckland Lantern Festival on February 14 (Auckland time), the Director of the HKETO, Mr Raymond Fan, said Hong Kong always celebrates the Lunar New Year with a wide range of arts and cultural activities for public enjoyment, including lantern carnivals and lantern displays, during this festive period.

Mr Fan said, "We are very excited to join this lantern event again to continue our close connection with the community in Auckland and to celebrate together the joyous Year of the Pig.

"This is also a wonderful time to share with you highlights of Hong Kong's unique culture and diversity. We have eight giant pillar lanterns in the festival here along with magnificent Hong Kong photos to showcase Hong Kong's beauty.

"Following the recent commissioning of mega transportation infrastructure such as the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, I am pleased to share with you the good news that various cultural projects in Hong Kong will be completed over the next few years.

"The West Kowloon Cultural District is one of the largest cultural projects in the world. Its first landmark venue, the Xiqu Centre, was officially opened on January 20. This world-class venue is designed for the conservation, promotion and development of Chinese opera.

"So please come to our marquee here in Domain to learn more about Hong Kong. I am sure you will be enticed to visit Hong Kong in the Year of the Pig to enjoy the incredible cuisine, exciting shopping, fantastic arts and culture and the city's photogenic skyline. Please also take a ride to explore the surrounding Greater Bay Area through our well connected new infrastructure, while businesses can take advantage of unlimited opportunities."

Mr Fan also attended the opening ceremony of the Auckland Lantern Festival later in the evening of February 14 (Auckland time).



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## [Update on latest MERS situation in Saudi Arabia](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 18) closely monitoring 14 additional cases of Middle East

Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), including 3 deaths, reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) between January 1 to 31. The CHP again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit.

According to the WHO, among the 13 male patients and one female patient, aged 33 to 86, 12 had underlying illnesses, two had consumed camel milk and five had contact with previously confirmed patients.

According to the latest information, 2 298 cases have been reported to the WHO (with 811 deaths), including 2 079 in 10 Middle East countries comprising 1 915 in the KSA, 87 in the United Arab Emirates, 28 in Jordan, 19 in Qatar, 16 in Oman, six in Iran, four in Kuwait, two in Lebanon, and one each in Yemen and Bahrain.

"We will maintain close communication with the WHO and relevant health authorities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus," the spokesman said.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS page of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the WHO's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

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## **[Public views invited for consultation on enhancing recreation and education potential of country parks and special areas in Hong Kong](#)**

The Government launched a public consultation on February 16 to seek public views on the proposals for "Enhancing the Recreation and Education Potential of Country Parks and Special Areas in Hong Kong".

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said, "About 44 300 hectares of countryside has been conserved as country parks and special areas in Hong Kong. They have not only provided habitats for diverse animals and plants, but also venues for countryside recreation and outdoor education for the public.

"The Government commissioned a consultancy study in January 2017 to explore opportunities to enhance the recreation and education potential of Hong Kong country parks and special areas with a view to broadening and diversifying visitors' experience and meeting the growing demand for countryside recreation while maintaining their conservation functions. To help develop the recommendations of the study, a series of engagement activities, including stakeholders' interviews, public opinion surveys and engagement workshops were conducted in the past two years to gather and generate ideas on the proposals."

After studying the environmental, planning, design and operation considerations, four shortlisted enhancement proposals were reached as follows:

(1) Enhancement of Existing Facilities

The Government proposes to enhance the existing facilities and activities to enrich visitors' experience and cater for people of different ages and physical abilities, including enhancing the existing country park visitor centres as visitor hubs to serve as gateways to country parks and special areas and one-stop service hubs; introducing an advance booking system for popular camp sites to facilitate activity planning and strengthen management; providing more viewing platforms for scenery appreciation, and enhancing physically handicapped and able-bodied sites and facilities.

(2) Open Museums for Historical Relics Appreciation

To enhance conservation of historical relics and maximise the education value of country parks and special areas on local history, the Government proposes to set up open museums on cultural heritage resources within country parks and special areas, with various education activities provided.

(3) Tree Top Adventure

Subject to environmental conditions and matching with nature education elements, the Government proposes to provide tree-top adventure activities along with a wide variety of associated activities, such as canopy walks and tree climbing for various age groups, to deepen their understanding of nature conservation.

(4) Enhancement of Glamping Sites and Eco-lodges

To diversify the types of overnight facilities provided in country parks, the Government proposes to set up glamping sites and eco-lodges to enrich campers' experience and facilitate campers of different age groups with different needs to connect with nature.

A consultation document, leaflet, website and public forums have been produced and arranged to publicise the proposals and to provide platforms to gather views and opinions. Roving exhibitions and interactive exhibitions

will also be held to introduce the proposals to the public. The consultation document and information on the public engagement activities have been uploaded to the dedicated website ([www.cp-recreation.hk](http://www.cp-recreation.hk)). Members of the public are invited to share their views by email ([myviews@cp-recreation.afcd.gov.hk](mailto:myviews@cp-recreation.afcd.gov.hk)) on or before May 15.

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## **Labour Department to hold occupational health public talks**

The Labour Department (LD) will hold a public talk entitled "Prevention of upper limb disorders" on February 25 (Monday). The talk will briefly introduce the causes and preventive measures of upper limb disorders to enhance employees' awareness of the issues. Demonstrations and practice of workplace exercise will be included.

The LD will hold another talk entitled "Work and diabetes mellitus and hypertension" on February 28 (Thursday). The talk will introduce some health tips for working in hot environments or on irregular schedules or when performing heavy manual work, in order to promote occupational health awareness of employees with diabetes mellitus or hypertension.

Both talks will be given by the LD's occupational health nurse in Cantonese at 3pm in the Lecture Hall of the Hong Kong Space Museum, 10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui. Admission is free. For enquiries or registration, please call 2852 4040.

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## **EPD convictions in January**

Sixty-six convictions were recorded in January 2019 for breaches of legislation enforced by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD).

Three of the convictions were under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance, 28 were under the Noise Control Ordinance, four were under the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance, 27 were under the Waste Disposal Ordinance, and four were under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance.

The heaviest fine in January was \$25,000, assessed in two convictions against a company which used powered mechanical equipment otherwise than in accordance with permit conditions, and carried out prescribed construction work not in accordance with the conditions of a construction noise permit.