



Lantau Development Plan

Statement by the Living Islands Movement

8 January 2005

The Aims of the Living Islands Movement come from considering the VALUES of Lantau and its islands:

1. They are a 'green lung' which benefits all the peoples of Hong Kong.
2. Their ecology is unique in the whole of South China and one of the richest in the whole of China. It is to be valued as a timeless Chinese National Treasure and not merely land to be exploited for profit in the present age by a minority.
3. It could significantly raise the income of the inhabitants as a whole - and notably the indigenous population - if these true values are appreciated and wisely used.

From this standpoint, we are disappointed in the extreme by the Task Force's document in the following three respects:

1. It does not live up to its title of a 'Concept Plan' for discussion. It is incomplete: significant developments are not shown and outlying islands are excluded. The status of projects is not shown: some are proceeding without consultation. Rather, the report should be described as 'some initial proposals for development projects'. In our view, a concept plan should begin with clear statements of policy aims based upon a vision -- such as those stated above. This would be followed listing ideas - not projects - pursuant to these policy aims.
2. Instead of a generalised framework in which to seek ideas of the community, we have been given a number of arbitrary proposals for specific places without reference to the whole. This is not the right starting point for either community involvement or wise outcomes.
3. The process of involving the community has followed the old, ineffective one that stems from a colonial era of government. After disastrous years of creating conflict, we have heard the Chief Executive and the Chief Secretary tell us that they would learn to listen more to the people. We were expecting a change. That expectancy was heightened by the encouraging process adopted by the Sustainable Development Task Force. Here, thirteen facilitated meetings in groups of 40 - 60 (nearly 600 people in all) were encouraged to give their ideas and contribute. There were also four larger seminars. We had thought that this marked a change in the tired old way of doing things - a significant move towards democratic governance. We are extremely upset that our confidence has been dashed once again.

We therefore recommend that the second phase of the consultation for Lantau and its islands:

- distils, from ideas gathered in the first phase, a comprehensive set of policy aims;
- provides a list of general ideas the execution of which would help meet these aims but are not detailed and decided as to place nor extent.

This should then be used as an input to full community discussion, following the procedural precedent of the Sustainable Development Task Force, the purpose of which would be to use the knowledge and ideas of the community and widen the base of the list of ideas, fact and factors.

This information so gathered would then provide the basis of a third report largely comprising initial functional specifications for **study projects** and a firm programme for involving the community in deciding the final specific projects list and programme.