

Country and Marine Parks Board
Summary Report of the Marine Parks Committee

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper informs members of issues discussed at the Marine Parks Committee meeting held on 26 June 2014. Major issues discussed at the meeting are summarised below.

2. Proposed Construction of Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park Visitor Centre

2.1 Members were briefed on the proposed construction of the Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park Visitor Centre (MPVC) in terms of its background, its purpose, its proposed location, proposed facilities, public consultation and concern, latest development and the construction project, etc.

2.2 Members noted that the construction of the MPVC aimed to provide information and education on marine parks and marine conservation; to provide a coach loading/unloading area and a coach turning area to alleviate the traffic congestion at the roundabout of Hoi Ha Road; and to provide public toilets for visitors' use. The proposed facilities included a reception and exhibition hall, a warden post, a public toilet, a water tank, coach loading/ unloading area and a coach turning area. The construction of the MPVC was expected to be completed in 2017.

2.3 Members noted that the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) had conducted a public consultation exercise and a questionnaire survey with the Hoi Ha villagers, the education sector and users of the Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park on the MPVC proposal. Based on the feedback of the consultation meetings and findings of questionnaires, most of the parties consulted considered the proposal acceptable and feasible. Among them, some parties consulted were concerned about the loss of BBQ sites upon the construction of the MPVC. In order to preserve some BBQ sites without compromising the facilities of the MPVC, the AFCD would scale down the MPVC accordingly. Some Hoi Ha villagers worried that the increase in the number of visitors after the full operation of the MPVC might bring about traffic and road safety concern to visitors and villagers. In addition, the new warden post,

which was at a distance of 500 metres from the beach, would affect the regular patrol at the Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park. In response, the AFCD pointed out that they had no intention to increase the number of coach permits after opening of the MPVC. Therefore, it was expected that there was no significant increase of visitors and vehicles making access to Hoi Ha Road. The AFCD would also monitor the traffic condition and liaise with other relevant government departments such as the Transport Department to discuss if it was necessary to further enhance the traffic measures after the full operation of the MPVC. The AFCD had also explained to the villagers that while the existing warden post in Hoi Ha village would be relocated to the new MPVC, the regular law enforcement action, patrols and visitors' services would continue.

2.4 Members generally supported the proposed construction of the MPVC and put forward the following major proposals: (1) the built form and the interior design of the MPVC should integrate with and demonstrate the concepts of the Marine Park, marine resources education and green construction; (2) native trees should be preserved in-situ as far as practicable and the possibility of growing some native trees in-situ or at other suitable locations should be explored; and (3) improvement measures on the safety and easy access to the Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park/roundabout at Hoi Ha village from the MPVC should be explored.

3. Preliminary Results of Reef Fish Diversity Survey

3.1 Members were briefed on preliminary findings and the way forward of a reef fish diversity survey conducted by the AFCD's Diving Team. Members were informed that the purpose of the survey was to review the existing data and to collect diversity and other ecological information of reef fish communities at Sharp Island and Bluff Island.

3.2 Members noted that preliminary findings indicated that a relatively high diversity of reef-associated fishes had been recorded in both sites, reflecting the generally healthy status of the coral communities at the two study sites. The higher species recorded in Sharp Island was likely attributable to the more diverse habitats which could allow inhabitation of a wider variety of fishes. In addition, "No anchoring areas" had been set up at Bluff Island and Sharp Island since 2001 and 2004 respectively. This protective measure has effectively reduced external damage on the coral communities and was regarded as an effective means to enhance indirectly the reef fish communities.

3.3 Members noted that the way forward of the survey included an increase of survey sites to cover different marine habitats, and further studies to investigate the temporal and spatial pattern of the reef fish communities.

4. Progress Report on Marine Parks and Marine Reserve

4.1 The Country and Marine Parks Authority Progress Report on Marine Parks and Marine Reserve for the period from 1 February to 30 April 2014 was presented at the meeting. Members noted the content of the paper.

5. Presentation

5.1 This paper is prepared for members' information.

Country and Marine Parks Authority
October 2014