

The Director's Statement

In the year 2001, the most important sewerage scheme ever built in Hong Kong, the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme Stage 1, was fully completed and put into operation. With the commissioning of the scheme, more than 1.3 million cubic metres of sewage collected from Tsuen Wan, Tsing Yi, Kowloon Peninsular, Tseung Kwan O, Chai Wan and Shaueiwan are now conveyed through a deep tunnel system to a sophisticated sewage treatment plant at Stonecutters Island for purification before disposal to the western side of the Victoria Harbour. This is a very major step in the Government's effort to improve the water quality of the harbour which over the years has suffered from pollution caused by continual intensive urban growth around the harbour. Successful completion of the scheme was by no means an easy task; it had required the dedicated efforts of the project team more than 7 years of hard work. During this period, the team have overcome a myriad of engineering and contractual problems, and have eventually produced a world class sewerage infrastructure which will serve the community well for many years to come. Following the completion of Stage 1 and with its beneficial effects on water quality beginning to show, work has already started on mapping out the future stages of the scheme aimed at collecting up sewage from the remaining areas in the northern and western part of Hong Kong Island and providing treatment to a high standard of all flows under the scheme before discharging to the sea.

During the year, upgrading the treatment standard and expanding the capacity of Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Plant have been completed. The plant is now able to serve the developments in the Fanling and Sheung Shui New Town, and produce a very high quality effluent for discharge to the Ng Tung River. Together with the progressive completion of works under the Sewerage Master Plan programme, the sewerage infrastructure of the territory is being continuously extended and upgraded to protect the environment and provide a high standard of service to the community.

In the past year, Hong Kong experienced some of the most severe rainstorms. As a result, several lowlying areas in the northern part of New Territories have suffered serious floods. The Ting Ping Shan area near Sheung Shui and the Ngau Tam Mei area near Yuen Long have been affected most, although major river training works to vastly improve the flood protection standard at these locations were already under construction. For the other areas, they were flooded either because of problems in the local drainage system or because they are naturally flood prone areas where improvement works are still underway or have yet to start. In fact, with the progressive completion of a large programme of flood prevention works in the New Territories, the risk of flooding has already been reduced significantly both in the extent of areas affected and the severity of the floods experienced in comparison to the situation in the 90s. However, a lot of work is still required to raise the flood protection standard of both the flood prone areas in the NT and the older urban areas to a sufficiently high level which is now expected by the community. A comprehensive strategy to upgrade the drainage infrastructure has been devised and a programme of improvement works is being implemented to achieve this objective. As several major flood prevention projects, including the West Kowloon Drainage Improvement Scheme, are due for completion over the next three years, we expect to see further substantial reduction of flood risks in the near future.

Looking ahead, it is important that we not only aim to provide the community with a high standard of service but also deliver the service in the most cost-effective manner. We must therefore continually review the method of managing our capital works projects and the mode of operating and maintaining our extensive facilities to ensure that the most efficient methods are used. We also need to examine closely our organisation structure and procedures with the aim of achieving higher productivity. I am confident that with the dedication and good team spirit of the staff which have been so well demonstrated in major undertakings of the department in the past, we will be able to achieve successful outcomes once again.

I like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all staff of the Drainage Services Department for their support, hard work and dedication in the past year without which we would not be able to attain the achievements recorded in this report.



Raymond T K Cheung
Director of Drainage Services