



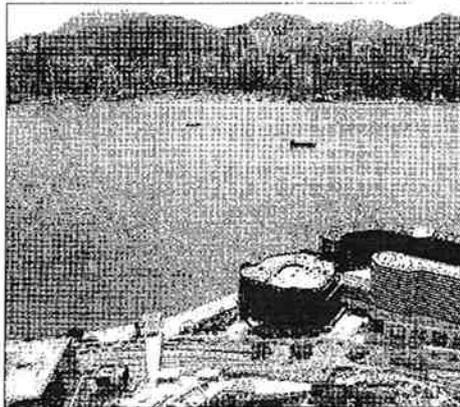
## Entirely new approach needed to realise harbour's true potential

I refer to your article (" 'Cut land premiums to revitalise harbour' ", December 1), on the release of the Harbour Business Forum's integrated harbour vision and plan report.

The report aims to persuade the government to adopt a new integrated approach to the planning, development and management of Victoria Harbour, since this is the only way we believe the harbour's true potential can be realised. To that end, we were disappointed that your article chose to highlight the possible use of land-premium concessions as a means to revitalise the harbour.

The potential use of such concessions is just one possible tool out of many that the report recommends should be considered and is just a small part of a much more comprehensive proposal for a new integrated approach.

We consider this report, undertaken by GHK (Hong Kong) Ltd, to be of critical importance to Hong Kong. Victoria Harbour is Hong Kong's defining natural asset, but its current state reflects a huge missed opportunity.



**The current state of Victoria Harbour reflects a huge missed opportunity.** Photo: May Tse

Other cities around the world are using their waterfronts to provide vibrant community places, stimulate jobs and growth and increase their quality of life and attractiveness. By contrast, much of our harbour and harbourfront areas remain inaccessible and poorly utilised. The current state of Victoria Harbour fails to meet the needs and aspirations of our citizens and businesses, and is undermining our competitiveness.

Much of the debate about Victoria Harbour has focused on the symptoms, identifying the physical problems and drawing up plans of what would be nice to have instead. The Harbour Business Forum's report goes beyond the symptoms to examine the true underlying causes behind why the harbour is failing to live up to its potential.

It identified a multitude of causes, from a lack of policy priority and weak governance structures, as your article notes, to a lack of strategic planning, inadequate plan-making systems and implementation tools, restrictive management practices, funding problems and apparent failures to take on board lessons learned.

Given the number of challenges identified, the report calls for an entirely new integrated approach to the planning, development and management of Victoria Harbour. Moreover, it sets out, step by step, how this new approach can be implemented so that our harbour can realise its true potential.

As the report notes, attempting to "cherry-pick" from our proposals will compromise the desired outcome and compromise the potential benefits that a world-class harbour could bring to Hong Kong.

Simple tweaking of specific government policy on such matters as land premiums will not be enough to create the attractive, diverse, vibrant, accessible and sustainable harbour that Hong Kong wants and needs. Rather, an entirely new approach is needed and we look forward to working with the government to turn this vision into reality. Maggie Brooke, best practice committee chair, Harbour Business Forum