



The HKMA in the Community



During a year of change and uncertainties worldwide and of economic difficulty in Hong Kong, the tasks of explaining our policies and of maintaining dialogue with the community took on an even greater significance than in the past. During 2001 the HKMA's contacts with the general public and their elected representatives increased considerably, and our educational programmes – the highlight of which was a major summer exhibition – continued to expand and develop.

Accountability to the community

The HKMA serves Hong Kong by maintaining a stable Hong Kong dollar, by promoting a sound banking system, and by developing a robust financial infrastructure. All these help strengthen Hong Kong's role as an international financial centre. But the HKMA must have the confidence of the community if it is to perform its duties well. The HKMA believes that the best way of securing this confidence is through a financial system that is not only efficient, but also transparent and in line with Hong Kong's needs. The HKMA therefore takes seriously the duty of explaining its policies and work to the general public and strives to address the concerns of the community.

Legally speaking, the HKMA is accountable to the public through the Financial Secretary, who appoints the Monetary Authority, and through the laws passed by the Legislative Council that set out the HKMA's powers and responsibilities. The HKMA also recognises a broader responsibility to promote a better understanding of its roles and objectives and to keep itself informed of community concerns. In its day-to-day operations and in its wider contacts with the community,

the HKMA pursues a policy of transparency and accessibility. This policy has two main objectives:

- to keep the financial industry and the general public as fully informed of the work of the HKMA as possible, subject to considerations of market sensitivity, commercial confidentiality and statutory restrictions on disclosure of confidential information;
- to ensure that the HKMA is in touch with, and responsive to, the community that it serves.

Achievements in 2001

The HKMA fulfilled its commitment to transparency and accessibility through a variety of channels. These include:

- extensive and proactive contacts with the mass media
- frequent meetings with legislators
- a variety of regular and special publications
- a large and comprehensive bilingual website
- an annual education programme for secondary school students
- a summer exhibition held in three busy shopping centres
- a public enquiries service staffed nine hours a day.

Public education programme

The most prominent event in the HKMA's community relations programme in 2001 was the presentation of our second summer exhibition in three shopping centres spread across Hong Kong between 20 July and 5 August. The exhibition presented the key policy objectives of the HKMA, and Hong Kong's monetary development, with a special focus on the security features of banknotes and coins. Historical banknotes and coins with highlights on security features, and samples of counterfeit notes and coins held by the Hong Kong Police – and not previously shown to the general public – were displayed at the exhibition.

The exhibition was supplemented by a radio quiz on finance and economics, sponsored by the HKMA on RTHK Radio 2, and workshops on "How to identify counterfeit banknotes" conducted by representatives from the Commercial Crime Bureau. Student ambassadors from six universities in Hong Kong worked

alongside with HKMA staff to explain exhibits and answer enquiries to visitors. The exhibition attracted more than 80,000 visitors. A reduced version of the exhibition, travelling to three universities between January and March 2002, brought the exhibits to a further 15,000 students.

The HKMA continued to organise its annual education programme for secondary school students and teachers and other groups. In 2001 a programme of seven seminars was organised for more than 4,500 students, teachers and members of various community organisations. The Linked Exchange Rate system and monetary development in Hong Kong, with special emphasis on banknote security features, were the main themes for the seminars. An education pack, containing useful reference books and a VCD on the work of the HKMA, was distributed to students during the seminars. Since the launch of the education programme in 1998, more than 16,000 students and teachers have participated in the seminars.



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1 Exhibition at the New Town Plaza, Sha Tin.

2-4 Visitors learn more about the security features and design of banknotes and coins in Hong Kong through various kinds of interactive games.

5-6 Representatives from the Commercial Crime Bureau explain the security features of banknotes to the public.

7 Chief Executive Joseph Yam presents the first prize to the radio quiz winner.



8-11 The HKMA organises seven educational seminars in 2001.



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Media

The most frequent and extensive channel of communication between the HKMA and the community is the news media. The HKMA continued to strengthen its ties with print and electronic media in 2001 to enhance transparency of its policies.

During the year, senior staff of the HKMA continued to adopt a pro-active approach to the media, and participated in a number of press conferences, background briefings, newsroom visits, individual interviews and technical workshops. Eight press conferences (compared with six in 2000) were held in 2001.

During 2001 a total of 192 press releases were issued, representing an increase of 10% over 2000. The press section handled an average of 38 press enquiries per day, compared with an average of 35 in 2000. In February 2001, the HKMA has introduced a new quarterly press release on the banking sector's credit card receivables, with a view to providing greater market transparency on credit card business undertaken by authorized institutions. In addition, transparency of the residential mortgage survey results has been enhanced by more disclosure of the interest margin of new mortgage loans in the monthly press release.

Four educational briefings (compared with three in 2000) were arranged in 2001 for reporters and editors, covering topics such as banking supervision, banks' securities business and regulation and the development of bond market in Hong Kong.



The news media is the most frequent and extensive channel of communication between the HKMA and the community.

Publications

Publications published by the HKMA cover monetary, banking and economic issues with the objectives of providing information and promoting greater understanding of the work of the HKMA. During the year, the HKMA continued to disseminate information through its *Monthly Statistical Bulletin* and *Quarterly Bulletin*.

The *HKMA Annual Report 2000*, covering the HKMA's work for the year, was published with the addition, for the first time, of a summary version for wider circulation and a fully interactive web version. The Report was honoured with the Silver Award in the Best Annual Reports Award held by the Hong Kong Management Association and was commended for its comprehensiveness and accessibility.

In addition to its regular publications, the HKMA publishes special publications to address issues of public interests. An information leaflet on the new security features for Hong Kong's \$1,000 banknote was published in June. A booklet focusing on banknote security features, to accompany the summer exhibition 2001, was published in July and over 27,000 copies were distributed at the exhibition venues.

The HKMA continued its efforts in developing e-publications to provide educational information through efficient and free access of the Internet. In early 2001, an interactive glossary – *Guide to Hong Kong Monetary and Banking Terms* – was launched, offering a convenient on-line reference tool with search and cross-referencing functions. In October 2001, an e-publication *Money in Hong Kong*, focusing on currency and giving a brief survey of Hong Kong's monetary and banking systems from the early years to the present, was made available on the HKMA website to promote understanding of how money works in Hong Kong.



The HKMA on-line

In 2001 the HKMA website continued to make extensive information instantly accessible to people throughout the world. A total of 6.3 million page views were recorded in year 2001, representing an increase of 28% over 2000 (Chart 1). It is one of the most frequently visited websites among the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's websites.

From time to time, new sections on the website were posted to disseminate topical and timely information. During the year, special pages launched included security features for the Hong Kong \$1,000 notes, daily release of TraHK Tap Balance, euro notes and coins, and educational interactive games adopted from the HKMA summer exhibition 2001.

The weekly opinion cyber-column *Viewpoint* continued to serve as a valuable channel of comment and information. It was widely carried in local newspapers and on international newswires.

The HKMA website also serves as a two-way communication channel between the HKMA and its users. During 2001 email facilities were expanded for answering specific requests.

In December, a new page of HKMA Research Memoranda was launched to disseminate the materials produced by our Research Department to a wider public, and readers can send their comments and feedback directly to a dedicated email address, which goes directly to the Research Department. Our news update e-mail service, launched in 2000, now has more than 700 subscribers.

CHART 1

Page views of the HKMA website

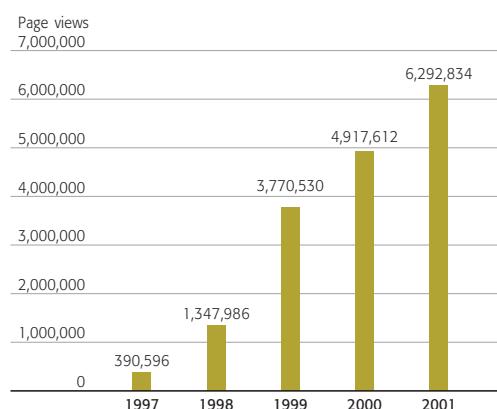


TABLE 1

HKMA public enquiries during 2001

Nature of calls	Number
Requests for information	5,613
Complaints	417
Questions	110
Suggestions	47
Total	6,187

Public enquiry service

The HKMA received a total of 6,187 public enquiries in 2001 (Table 1), representing an increase of 33% over 2000. These enquiries, which were received mainly by telephone, consisted for the most part of requests for statistical or background information from researchers, industry professionals, students and the general public: they also included complaints and suggestions. The HKMA is committed to delivering a speedy and informed response to all callers.

The HKMA's library, which houses a varied collection of books, periodicals and materials on monetary and economic affairs, is open to members of the public four days a week.

The Legislative Council

During 2001, the HKMA continued to maintain close contacts with the Legislative Council. The HKMA briefs the Legislative Council, through its Financial Affairs Panel, on the full range of its policy responsibilities three times every year. It also provides additional briefings on request and to present policy and legislative proposals. Over the year, staff from the HKMA attended a total of 45 Legislative Council Panel and Bills Committee meetings on a variety of issues, ranging from the Banking Amendment Bill to homeowners in negative equity and deposit insurance.



The HKMA senior staff members brief the Legislative Council, through its Financial Affairs Panel, on the full range of its policy responsibilities.

As a supplement to its formal briefings to the Financial Affairs Panel of the Legislative Council, the HKMA continued its programme of informal contacts with Legislative Councillors. The informal contacts proved to be useful for the senior staff of the HKMA to exchange views and opinions with Legislative Councillors on a wide range of topical issues.

Community Participation

The HKMA participated in various community events and fund-raising activities. An HKMA team took part in the Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon on 4 February 2001. At the Green Power Hike on 17 March 2001, the HKMA team won the 1st runner-up in the Corporate/Organisation Cup. The Blood Donation Day arranged with Hong Kong Red Cross on 11 May 2001 attracted 51 blood donors. Other fund-raising activities such as Community Chest's Skip Lunch Day, Green Day, Dress Casual Day, were earnestly participated by staff.

The HKMA had set up a Volunteer Team in 2001. During the year, our colleagues undertook more than 600 hours of voluntary services after office hours. The voluntary services undertaken included organising hospital visits, and arranging outings for elderly patients.

To render support to the disabled persons, the HKMA procured suitable office supplies items from a workshop of physically handicapped persons.

Plans for 2002 and beyond

The HKMA will continue to serve the community by discharging its responsibilities in a professional and effective way, and with a high degree of transparency and accountability. The HKMA will also seek to foster continuing confidence in its work by promoting a broader understanding of monetary and banking matters while at the same time ensuring that community concerns are taken into account in the formulation and implementation of policies and the handling of issues.

The HKMA will continue to seek ways of involving secondary schools, universities, community groups and other organisations in its activities through seminars, special projects, competitions and other means. We intend, in the coming year, to place special emphasis on developing our educational tools for students and on expanding our services to schools and universities.

Additional efforts will be made to improve the quality and extend the range of publications. A comprehensive project is now in progress to renew the scope, contents and format of the *Quarterly Bulletin* and *Monthly Statistical Bulletin*: we expect new revisions of these periodicals to be available in 2003.



1 The HKMA team wins the 1st runner-up in the Corporate/Organisation Cup at the Green Power Hike.

2-3 HKMA volunteers visit the elderly patients of TWGH Fung Yiu King Hospital prior to the Mid-Autumn Festival, and enjoy an outing to the Ocean Park for the patients in November 2001.

