HONG KONG FUTURE ECONOMY INSTITUTE / RESEARCH REPORT

EVENTS CAPITAL IN WAITING

Attracting International Tours to Hong Kong: Challenges and Reforms

NOVEMBER 2026



Executive Summary

Hong Kong has the assets of an events capital: strong policy backing, international connectivity and major new venues. Yet these strengths have not translated into a comparable share of international Western tours. Our dataset covers 174 documented multi-market concert tours, comprising approximately 2,900 performances across Asia between January 2023 and September 2026. Among Western tours, just 21.1% included Hong Kong, against 49.5% for Singapore and 74.7% for Tokyo. Hong Kong appeared on only one of sixty Western itineraries visiting fewer than six Asian cities.

Why is Hong Kong missing so many of these tours? Attracting international productions requires more than physical capacity. Audiences need to be able to buy tickets with confidence, and promoters need to secure suitable venues while coordinating dates across cities. Our review identifies weaknesses on both fronts.

First, ticketing arrangements leave fans exposed to fraud, bots and scalping, while ticket allocations remain opaque. Concert-ticket fraud cases rose 61.8% in 2025 to 2,805. Scalping controls are also weak: the maximum penalty remains HK$2,000, unchanged since 1950, and the resale offence does not cover venues managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). We found no requirement at any major venue to publish a full breakdown of ticket allocations. These failures can damage confidence in both the event and Hong Kong as a destination. For an overseas fan, an unreliable ticket purchase puts the whole visit at risk, including spending on hotels, restaurants and local businesses.

Second, government venue booking rules are poorly suited to international touring. Ordinary booking at the Coliseum and Queen Elizabeth Stadium opens twelve months ahead; earlier applications are considered case by case, with the criteria for earlier applications not clearly set out, no published advance window and no provisional-hold mechanism. Applicants must be registered in Hong Kong, and booking history counts when applications compete. These rules make it harder for international promoters to plan and secure dates. None of the Western or Korean tours in our dataset used an LCSD venue.

We recommend two sets of reforms:

1. **Modernise ticketing and consumer protection.** Require disclosure of ticket allocations and higher standards for ticketing platforms, while prohibiting software used to defeat purchase limits. Extend the ticket-resale offence to LCSD-managed venues and raise the penalty from its 1950 level.
2. **Harmonise venue booking with touring practice across Government venues.** Publish a booking window of up to twenty-four months, with time-limited provisional holds, clear allocation rules and flexibility to move dates. Open eligibility to international promoters and provide binding approval timelines and guaranteed settlement terms. Make one government body accountable for securing international productions.

1. Introduction: Mega Events Are a Golden Opportunity

Hong Kong has the mandate, funding, connectivity and venues to build a mega-events economy. This memo asks whether those strengths are being converted into international concert tours, and identifies institutional reforms that could improve the city's offer to visiting productions.

1.1 National and Local Priorities

The 14th Five-Year Plan supported Hong Kong's development into an "East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange".[2] The 15th Five-Year Plan, adopted in March 2026, supports Hong Kong in deepening that role.[3] Live events give this role a highly visible expression. Their success depends directly on whether international artists and organisers choose to take part.

The 2026 Policy Address commits the Tourism Board "to solidify Hong Kong's reputation as the Events Capital of Asia".[4] The arts and culture and tourism blueprints reinforce that ambition.[5] Two instruments back these commitments.

- **Dedicated government funding.** The Mega Arts and Cultural Events Fund, set up in April 2023, was initially budgeted at about HK$60 million a year, with up to HK$15 million per event, to attract international and mega arts and cultural events. By August 2026 the Government's published list named twenty-seven supported events, including Art Basel Hong Kong.[6]
- **Cross-departmental coordination.** The Mega Events Coordination Group, announced in January 2024 and chaired by the Deputy Financial Secretary, provides high-level direction on mega events, with the Tourism Board as the first point of contact for organisers.[7]

1.2 Hong Kong's Strengths Match the Priority

Hong Kong can move, house and host tens of thousands of visitors with ease.

- **Connectivity and hospitality.** Hong Kong International Airport serves more than 220 destinations. Direct rail links reach 113 Mainland stations, and the city has about 93,000 hotel rooms.[8]
- **A "super-connector" location.** Hong Kong is the natural gateway to the Greater Bay Area, a market of more than 88 million people, and to the wider Mainland audience.[9] Nationals of about 170 countries and territories may visit without a visa, which makes it easier for international spectators and delegates to attend events in Hong Kong than in Mainland cities.[10]
- **Established expertise in business events.** Hong Kong already hosts international gatherings including Art Basel Hong Kong and Hong Kong FinTech Week.[11] Its common-law system, intellectual-property protection and free flow of capital support international contracting.
- **Hard infrastructure.** Kai Tak Sports Park, opened in 2025, addressed the city's historic lack of large-scale venues. Its 50,000-seat stadium has a retractable roof and recorded the third-highest ticket sales among major venues worldwide in 2025.[1] The park has hosted more than 170 sessions of international and local mega events to date, drawing over 2.6 million spectators.[4] Alongside it, the city has three indoor arenas of 10,000 seats or more.

Attracting more international events could boost tourism, create jobs and support local businesses, spreading the economic benefits beyond venues and organisers. A *South China Morning Post* analysis citing Professor Haiyan Song of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University estimates the economic contribution of Coldplay's four nights at Kai Tak in April 2025 at about HK$1.2 billion.[12]

This memo uses original data to examine how often international artists choose Hong Kong and assesses whether the city's cultural events institutions meet international standards. Section 2 measures how often tours visiting Asia include Hong Kong. Sections 3 and 4 examine ticketing infrastructure and venue management, and how they affect Hong Kong's ability to attract and host international productions. Section 5 sets out our recommendations.

2. Key Finding: Hong Kong Is Lagging Behind

2.1 Measuring Where International Tours Choose to Play

Official statistics count tickets sold, venue utilisation and event-days hosted. These show activity, but not whether Hong Kong attracts the international tours that visit Asia. We therefore measure the share of documented multi-market tours visiting Asia that included each city. This compares cities as destinations for productions already visiting the region, although demand, costs and routing also influence their choices. Inclusion rates complement ticket volumes by measuring the breadth of tours a city attracts rather than the number of performances it hosts.

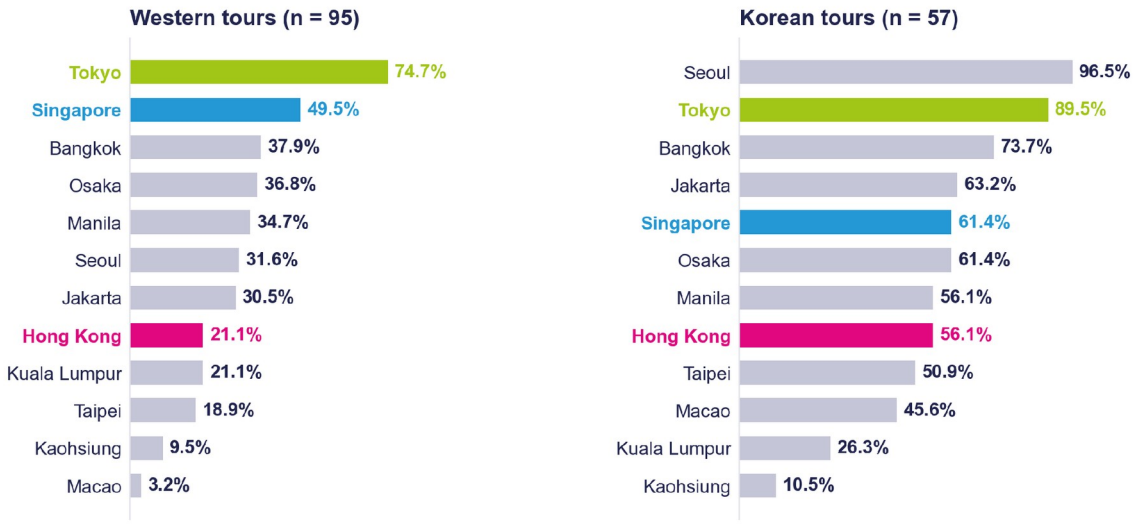
We build an event-level dataset from English Wikipedia's concert-tour articles, which publish a per-show itinerary for documented tours. From the 2023 to 2026 year categories we screen 563 tours. We keep those that played two or more Asian countries, or one Asian country plus dates outside Asia. Of those, we retain the 174 whose Asian dates had all been played by the data build in September 2026, comprising approximately 2,900 Asian performances.

Among the sources we assessed, Wikipedia offered the most complete openly accessible tour itineraries. We check the dataset against independently compiled listings of international acts performing in Hong Kong and Singapore, and verify its Coliseum records against the Government's published event calendars. These checks identify omissions in both markets: the dataset captures about a third of the acts in the Hong Kong reference listing and a quarter in Singapore's. The reference listings count acts and include some performances outside the study criteria, whereas this study counts tours; these shares are not coverage rates for eligible tours. The checks do not establish how omissions affect comparisons between cities. Our results therefore measure inclusion among documented multi-market tours (Online Appendix A.1, A.3 and A.4).

2.2 International Tours Are Choosing Other Cities

Hong Kong was on the itinerary for 21.1% of Western tours, against Singapore's 49.5% and Tokyo's 74.7%. It ties with Kuala Lumpur for eighth of the twelve markets (Figure 1, left).

Figure 1: Hong Kong's gap with Singapore is wide for Western acts, narrow for Korean ones



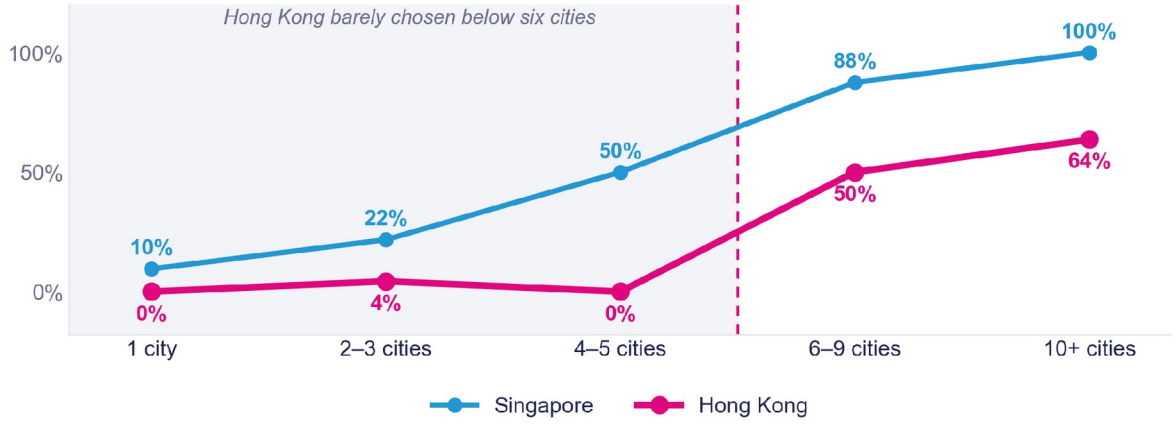
Share of multi-market tours including each Asian market, 2023–2026. Left: Western tours (n = 95). Right: Korean tours (n = 57). Hong Kong ties with Kuala Lumpur among Western tours and with Manila among Korean tours. Sample: tours whose Asian dates had all been played by 5 September 2026; shows before 1 January 2023 are not counted. Chinese-language rates and nights per visit are in Online Appendix Table B1; Mainland and Greater Bay Area comparators are in Online Appendix Table B6.

2.3 Some of the Longest Western Tours Bypass Hong Kong

Ed Sheeran played sixteen Asian cities on one tour without a Hong Kong date; Dua Lipa played eight. In total, 75 of the 95 Western tours did not include Hong Kong.

Hong Kong appears on just one of the sixty Western tours visiting fewer than six Asian cities, compared with fifteen for Singapore. Longer tours are more likely to include Hong Kong, but the gap remains: among tours visiting six or more Asian cities, 54% include Hong Kong against 91% for Singapore (Figure 2; Online Appendix B.2).

Figure 2: Hong Kong is rarely chosen until a tour plays six Asian cities



Share of Western tours in each itinerary-length band that included Hong Kong or Singapore, 2023–2026 (n = 95). Median Asian cities per tour: Western 4, Korean 8, Chinese-language 23. Tour counts by band, the Korean panel and a note on act size are in Online Appendix B.2.

For Korean acts, Hong Kong is close to Singapore: 56.1% against 61.4% across the window (Figure 1, right).

Itinerary length also helps explain the difference between Hong Kong's Western and Korean inclusion rates. Western tours typically visit fewer Asian cities: the median is four, compared with eight for Korean tours. But itinerary length does not fully account for the difference. Even among tours visiting six or more cities, Hong Kong trails Singapore by 37 percentage points for Western acts, compared with just 2 points for Korean acts (Online Appendix B.2).

2.4 The Shortfall Persists Throughout the Window

For Western tours, Hong Kong ranks joint eighth or joint ninth of the twelve markets in each routing cohort from 2023 to 2025. Rates by cohort are in Online Appendix B.3. The Western shortfall also persists when the sample is restricted to tours whose Asian performances all took place between September 2024 and August 2026 (Online Appendix B.4).

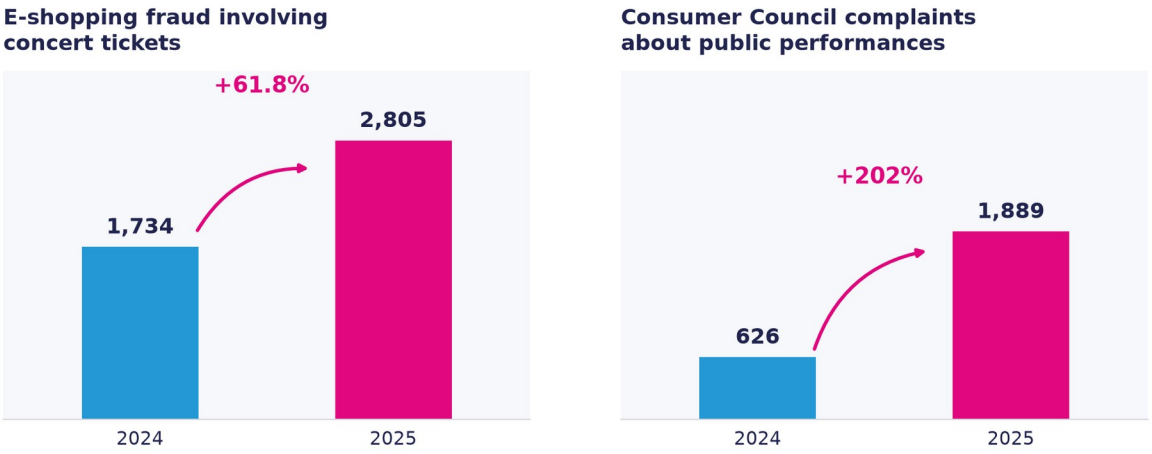
The data show no clear improvement in Hong Kong's position since Kai Tak opened. The only Western act in our data to have played Kai Tak is Coldplay, in April 2025. Theirs was one of the twenty Western tours Hong Kong captured. The Weeknd is booked there for October 2026, after the sample closes. Charlie Puth's date there has been postponed to April 2027.

3. Ticketing Infrastructure Has Not Kept Pace

Singapore challenges explanations based on population size, ethnic composition, or venue capacity. Its population is smaller, 6.0 million against Hong Kong's 7.5 million, and three-quarters of its residents are ethnically Chinese. Hong Kong now has four venues of 10,000 capacity or more, compared with Singapore's two.[13] Yet Singapore attracts more than twice the share of Western tours.

Why have Hong Kong's connectivity and expanded venue capacity not translated into a stronger position in international touring? One possible explanation is that Hong Kong's ticket market does not provide the reliability and transparency that fans and organisers need.

Figure 3: Ticket fraud and complaints rose sharply in 2025



Concert-ticket fraud cases and Consumer Council complaints about public performances, 2024–2025. Sources: Hong Kong Police Force; Consumer Council. Concert tickets rose from about 15% of all e-shopping fraud cases in 2024 to 22.4% in 2025 (Online Appendix Table C1). Both shares are calculated from police case counts.

3.1 Ticket Fraud Is Rising

Police recorded 2,805 concert-ticket fraud cases in 2025, up 61.8% in a year, while online shopping fraud overall rose 8.2% (Figure 3).[14] In the first five months of 2026 concert tickets accounted for more than 30% of online shopping fraud cases, even as those cases fell overall.[15]

Problems extend beyond fraud. Complaints to the Consumer Council about public performances rose to 1,889 in 2025, up 202%.[16] The Council also documented a Mainland visitor who cancelled his trip after a festival dropped its headline act and refused a refund.[17]

3.2 Bots Undermine Fair Access to Tickets

Ticket-buying bots allow scalpers to acquire tickets in bulk, as the Legislative Council Secretariat noted in 2019.[18] Existing safeguards have not eliminated bot-related ticketing problems. In February 2025, Cityline attributed a fifth of the cases it examined following a disputed ticket sale to bots or unauthorised software and reported the matter to the police.[19] The policy task is to strengthen protection and hold ticketing providers accountable for its effectiveness.

Other jurisdictions address these problems through both legislation and requirements for ticketing providers. The US BOTS Act prohibits circumventing ticketing controls that enforce purchase limits.[20] Singapore's Kallang Group appoints ticketing providers by open tender against requirements that include bot protection.[21]

3.3 Scalping Controls and Enforcement Are Weak

Our WiseNews search identified 188 newspaper articles mentioning ticket scalping in 2025, up from 62 in 2024. The coverage included reports of tickets offered above face value around major concerts and police operations against suspected scalpers outside venues (Table 1; Online Appendix Table C2).

Table 1: Selected press observations of ticket resale around major events, 2024–2025

Episode	What the reporting documents
Coldplay ticket sales, October 2024	"Scalpers were already out in force, with large numbers of Coldplay tickets listed on resale platforms. Four tickets originally priced at HK$1,299 each were advertised for HK$40,000 in total, more than seven times their face value." *Headline Daily*, 8 October.
Kai Tak opening ceremony, February 2025	"Although the ticket was listed for HK$10, the seller invited bids, with the highest bidder winning. A reporter enquiring as a buyer found that the ticket could be bought for HK$800." *Wen Wei Po*, 22 February.
Coldplay shows, April 2025	"A 30-year-old man offered two concert tickets for sale. Each had a face value of HK$1,699, but he was asking HK$2,399 per ticket." *Sing Pao*, 9 April.
Nicholas Tse shows, April 2025	"Police found people illegally selling tickets outside the main stadium at Kai Tak Sports Park and arrested two men and a woman." *HKEJ*, 25 April.
BLACKPINK public sale, June 2025	"A reporter contacted a seller on Xiaohongshu and found that a seated ticket originally priced at HK$1,499 was being offered for HK$5,600, nearly four times its face value." *Headline Daily*, 14 June.
G-Dragon shows, August 2025	"Listings on several social media platforms showed scalpers asking HK$6,000 to HK$7,000 for tickets originally priced at HK$1,699. Even the cheapest tickets, originally priced at HK$799, were listed for HK$5,000 to HK$6,000." Ming Pao, 5 August.

Source: WiseNews newspaper reports, obtained via HKU; English translations by HKFEI. Reports on the same episode are grouped. Methods: Online Appendix C.2.

The maximum penalty for reselling a ticket above face value remains HK$2,000, unchanged since 1950.[22] No one was convicted of the resale offence in cases concluded from 2022 to mid-2024, and the police keep no count of scalping reports.[24]

The offence also leaves major government venues outside its reach. It applies only to places licensed under the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance. A 2002 Order exempted LCSD- and Home Affairs-managed venues from the relevant licensing requirements, leaving venues such as the Coliseum outside the resale offence.[25] In April 2018, the Government undertook to study extending the offence to government venues, but no bill has followed.[23] Real-name ticketing at LCSD venues also depends on organisers' agreement.[23]

3.4 Ticket Allocation Lacks Transparency

Fans lack a clear account of how tickets are divided between public sale and other channels. At the Hong Kong Coliseum and Queen Elizabeth Stadium, hirers may distribute up to 70% of tickets outside public sale for runs of four or more performances, and up to 80% for shorter runs.[26]

Fewer than half of Coliseum entertainment-programme tickets reached public sale over the full selling period in each of the three years reported to November 2023. On the first day of sale, the share ranged from about 25% to 48%.[27] At Kai Tak, organisers determine their own ticketing arrangements, including the platform.[28] We found no requirement at any major venue to publish a full breakdown of ticket allocations. Non-public tickets can be allocated through credit-card

presales, fan clubs, sponsors, hotel packages, internal holds and artist allocations. Without one, a public-sale sellout does not reveal how many tickets remain in other channels.

3.5 Ticket Market Failures Harm Artists, Consumers and the City

An unreliable ticket market puts more than fans' money at risk. Payment for a fraudulent ticket reaches neither the artist nor the promoter nor the venue. Failed purchases, invalid tickets and refused refunds can damage confidence in the event, the artist and Hong Kong as a destination. For overseas visitors, buying a ticket is often the first step towards booking flights and hotels and planning other spending. When that purchase cannot be trusted, the city risks losing the whole visit—not just the ticket sale. For budget-constrained concertgoers, the added cost of resale mark-ups may displace spending on food, accommodation or other purchases. The visitor who abandons a trip after a ticketing failure is precisely the visitor Hong Kong's events strategy seeks to attract.

Poor ticketing also makes the market harder to assess. Without a full account of ticket allocations, a sold-out public tranche reveals little about how many tickets remain in other channels or how readily fans can obtain them. Organisers and venues need reliable sales and attendance information to choose venue sizes, add performances and assess demand. The Government needs it to judge whether investment in events is delivering results. Ticket reform is therefore part of the infrastructure for attracting international productions and converting their audiences into wider economic benefits.

4. Venue Management Is Out of Step with International Touring

Reliable ticketing is one requirement for hosting international productions; workable access to venues is another. This section examines whether Hong Kong's booking rules meet the needs of international touring.

The Government owns most of Hong Kong's major concert venues. LCSD runs the Coliseum and Queen Elizabeth Stadium, the Airport Authority owns AsiaWorld-Expo,[29] and a private operator runs the government-owned Kai Tak Sports Park.[1] Their booking arrangements differ: LCSD allocates ordinary bookings in monthly rounds, while other operators negotiate directly with promoters.

4.1 Full Venues Do Not Mean Hong Kong Is Winning Tours

High utilisation does not show whether Hong Kong is attracting international tours. The Coliseum recorded 100% utilisation in 2022, 2023 and the first eleven months of 2024. It granted 114 of the 575 applications received during that eleven-month period.[38] Kai Tak's Stadium and Arena were close to 90% utilised in the park's first year.[39] These figures show that venues are busy, but say nothing about tours that choose other cities or never apply.

Long runs can fill a venue's calendar without bringing a wider range of artists to Hong Kong. The three tours in our sample that used the Coliseum—Andy Lau, Eason Chan and Jacky Cheung—accounted for 73 performances. Across all segments, visiting tours averaged 3.19 Hong Kong performances, compared with 1.35 for Western tours.[40]

None of the twenty Western or thirty-two Korean tours that reached Hong Kong used an LCSD venue. All played venues booked directly with their operators (Table 2). The data do not establish why these tours did not use LCSD venues, but the pattern raises a clear question: are the booking rules serving the international touring market?

Table 2: Western and Korean tours play venues booked directly with their operators, never LCSD venues

Venue (capacity)	Western (n=20)	Korean (n=32)
Booked directly with the operator	**100%**	**100%**
Kai Tak Stadium (50,000)	5%	16%
AsiaWorld-Arena, Hall 1 (14,000 with standing)	35%	59%
Kai Tak Arena (10,000)	0%	0%
AsiaWorld-Expo, other halls (2,800–5,600)	35%	22%
Other venues	25%	3%
Booked through LCSD's allocation rules	**0%**	**0%**
Hong Kong Coliseum (12,500)	0%	0%
Queen Elizabeth Stadium (3,500)	0%	0%
Ko Shan Theatre (1,031)	0%	0%

Notes: Shares of each segment's Hong Kong visits, 2023–2026. Tours using two venues are split between them. "Other venues" comprises MacPherson Stadium, Kitty Woo Stadium, Central Harbourfront Event Space and AXA x Wonderland. Coverage is thinner below arena scale (Online Appendix A.1 and A.3). For Chinese-language tours and venue capacities, see Online Appendix Table D2.

4.2 Government Booking Rules Are Poorly Suited to International Touring

International tours must coordinate venue dates across several cities. Provisional holds let promoters reserve dates while routing is finalised and release those they do not need. A hold-and-challenge mechanism allows another applicant to require the promoter holding a date to confirm or release it.[34] LCSD's published process provides neither a defined advance window for Special Booking nor a provisional-hold mechanism, and generally makes date changes costly (Table 3).

- **The calendar opens too late.** Applications are accepted twelve months before the month of hire and assessed in monthly rounds.[30] Promoters needing to secure dates further ahead must use the case-by-case Special Booking route.
- **Dates are costly to change.** No provisional-hold mechanism is published. Changes generally require a fresh application and forfeiture of the reservation fee, although the conditions of use permit date transfers with managerial permission.[30] The promoter carries that risk alone, and can avoid it by routing elsewhere.
- **The applicant must be local.** Applications should come from a company or organisation registered in Hong Kong, and where bids compete the booking history of the event, artist or applicant is one of three published tie-break factors.[30] These requirements can add friction for new entrants, although international productions can work through local promoters.

Table 3: LCSD's booking rules and international touring requirements

Requirement	Touring requirements	Coliseum and Queen Elizabeth Stadium
Lead time	Advance certainty during routing	12 months; longer route case by case, no window published
Provisional holds	Time-limited, cost-free holds	None published
Date flexibility	Dates move as routing firms up	Generally requires a fresh application and fee forfeiture; date transfers require permission
Commercial terms	Negotiated per production	Published tariff: 20% of gross, with a daily minimum of HK$56,750 (Coliseum) or HK$13,900 (Queen Elizabeth Stadium)
Selection	Show merit and artist draw	Booking history is a tie-break factor
Eligibility	Open to international promoters	Hong Kong-registered company or organisation

Sources: LCSD booking guidelines and hire charges, effective 1 August 2025.[30, 31] Notes: Queen Elizabeth Stadium prioritises major international sports events. Ko Shan Theatre's ordinary window for non-opera hirers is seven months;[32] MacPherson Stadium also requires a Hong Kong-registered hirer.[33] Kai Tak accepts non-sports bookings up to twenty-four months ahead.[1] See Online Appendix Table D1 for comparison and tariff qualifications.

An earlier route exists through Special Booking, which is "considered on a case by case basis". The Government has told the Legislative Council that international pop concerts may apply more than a year ahead, but there is no published advance window or timetable for this route.[35] LCSD publishes a thirteen to twenty-four month window at the Cultural Centre and City Hall for "cultural performances involving renowned visiting artists".[36] It publishes no equivalent window at the Coliseum or Queen Elizabeth Stadium. The guidelines reissued in August 2025 changed the Coliseum's priority to concerts and left these terms in place.[30] [37] Promoters lacking a predictable, published route for planning ahead often choose to route tours to other cities to avoid this risk.

4.3 More Capacity Does Not Guarantee Access

Hong Kong has added arena capacity, but access for concerts remains constrained. Kai Tak Arena seats 10,000, yet its operator must reserve two-thirds of the year for sport and meet annual sports-event targets.[41] No tour in our sample played there. AsiaWorld-Arena remains the principal large indoor venue used by the sampled international tours outside the Coliseum.

The access problem also extends to smaller venues. Half of the twenty Western tours that reached Hong Kong played venues with 5,600 seats or fewer, including AsiaWorld-Expo's smaller halls, MacPherson Stadium and Kitty Woo Stadium. Yet neither Queen Elizabeth Stadium nor Ko Shan Theatre hosted a tour in the sample. Booking reform must open a workable route into smaller government venues as well as the Coliseum.

5. Policy Recommendations

The next phase of reform should improve the reliability of ticket purchasing and give international productions a predictable route to securing suitable venues.

5.1 Modernise the Ticketing and Consumer Protection Framework

The Government must treat ticketing infrastructure with the same seriousness as physical venue infrastructure.

- **Publish ticket allocation data.** Require organisers of major concerts to disclose before sale how tickets are allocated across public sale, presales, fan clubs, sponsors, internal holds and artist allocations, and to publish the final allocation breakdown afterwards. Apply the requirement at every major venue, including Kai Tak and AsiaWorld-Expo, not only at LCSD's. Fans would see how the public inventory compares with other allocations, and organisers, artists and venues would have a clearer basis for interpreting sales.
- **Modernise the statute.** Extend the ticket-resale offence to LCSD-managed venues, raise the maximum fine from its 1950 baseline, and require the police and LCSD to keep scalping statistics; the police do not at present.
- **Prohibit circumvention of ticket purchase limits.** Prohibit the use of software to defeat ticket purchase limits, drawing on the US BOTS Act.
- **Secure tickets and provide authorised resale.** Require dynamic QR credentials and identity verification at entry for designated high-demand events, and create a regulated, identity-bound resale channel so fans buying tickets after the initial sale are not dealing with anonymous sellers.
- **Upgrade ticketing platform infrastructure.** Require queue management, bot protection, scalability and secure ticket delivery as conditions of appointment for ticketing providers at major venues, as Singapore's Kallang Group does. Require providers to report on the effectiveness of their anti-bot measures.[21]

5.2 Harmonise Venue Access with Global Touring Requirements

Reform should cover LCSD’s portfolio and the terms the Government sets at other major venues. For busy halls, an earlier booking window must be accompanied by transparent decisions about competing uses. Use a pilot to refine allocation and provisional-hold procedures before rolling them out across the portfolio, and report its effects on existing users.

- **Publish an advance booking route with clear allocation rules.** Give the Coliseum, Queen Elizabeth Stadium and Ko Shan Theatre a published Special Booking window of up to twenty-four months, drawing on the longer windows at the Cultural Centre and City Hall. State which dates are available, how international applications will be assessed alongside other uses, and when decisions will be made. Introduce cost-free provisional holds with expiry dates and a challenge process requiring confirmation or release when another applicant is ready to commit. Allow date changes within published conditions as routing firms up.
- **Open access to international promoters.** Remove the requirement that applicants be Hong Kong-registered companies, or provide a fast-track route for international promoters, and assess relevant delivery experience across markets rather than relying on local booking history.
- **Publish approval timelines, hire terms, settlement dates and booking outcomes.** Set binding deadlines for all approvals an international production requires. Publish each major venue’s hire framework, with rates negotiable within it. Guarantee a timetable for the release of box-office receipts. Report applications, decisions, processing times and reasons for refusal in regular published statistics.

- **Make one agency accountable.** Give either the Mega Events Coordination Group or the Tourism Board's Mega Event Development and Advancement Division responsibility for venue access, approval times and hire terms. Require it to report on booking times, confirmed international tours, dates released from holds and effects on other users, and to oversee the rollout across the portfolio.

Notes

1. "LCQ10: Effectiveness and regulation of Kai Tak Sports Park in promoting sports development", written reply, 27 May 2026.

2. "LCQ1", oral reply, 26 October 2022, setting out the National 14th Five-Year Plan's support for Hong Kong as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange.

3. *Outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China*, Chapter 59, "Promoting the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and Macao", March 2026.

4. *The Chief Executive's 2026 Policy Address*, 16 September 2026: paragraphs 339 and 351 on culture, sports and tourism and the Events Capital of Asia, and paragraph 343 on Kai Tak Sports Park.

5. Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, *Blueprint for Arts and Culture and Creative Industries Development*, 26 November 2024; and *Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0*, 30 December 2024.

6. "LCQ21", written replies, 6 November 2024 and 28 May 2025; Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, list of events supported by the Mega Arts and Cultural Events Fund (data.gov.hk, updated 20 August 2026).

7. Government press release on the establishment of the Mega Events Coordination Group, 26 January 2024.

8. Airport Authority Hong Kong, 2025/26 traffic figures, 15 July 2026; MTR Corporation, High Speed Rail destinations page and 2025 annual results, 12 March 2026; "LCQ14", written reply, 18 March 2026 (93,336 rooms in 335 hotels, February 2026).

9. Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area, Overview (bayarea.gov.hk), 2025 population figure.

10. Immigration Department, "Visit / Transit" visa requirements page.

11. Art Basel, closing report for Art Basel Hong Kong 2026; Government press release on Hong Kong FinTech Week x StartmeupHK Festival 2025, 7 November 2025.

12. "Coldplay creates HK$1.2 billion for Hong Kong", *South China Morning Post*, 20 April 2025, citing Professor Haiyan Song of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The estimate is not an official one.

13. Capacities from the venue operators and the Government: Kai Tak Stadium (50,000) and Kai Tak Arena (10,000), Government press release, 1 March 2025; Hong Kong Coliseum (12,500), Leisure and Cultural Services Department; AsiaWorld-Arena (12,500 seated, up to 14,000 with standing), AsiaWorld-Expo capacity table. For Singapore, the National Stadium (55,000) and the Singapore Indoor Stadium (up to 12,000), The Kallang. The comparison counts rooms of 10,000 capacity or more and is ours, not an official one.

14. Hong Kong Police Force, "Law and order situation in Hong Kong in 2025", 11 February 2026; and Consumer Council, 2025 year-end press release.

15. RTHK news report, 29 June 2026, citing the Police Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau.

16. Consumer Council, 2025 year-end press release, 23 February 2026.

17. Consumer Council, press release on public performance complaints, *CHOICE* Magazine Issue 577, 15 November 2024; the Mainland visitor is Case 1.

18. Legislative Council Secretariat, *Ticket scalping in Hong Kong*, Essentials ISE04/18-19, 30 January 2019: "Improved technology has also enabled scalpers to snatch tickets in large quantity from the primary ticket market through automated software."

19. Cityline statement reported by The Standard, "Cityline stresses no system glitches in ticket sales for NJZ at ComplexCon", 12 February 2025. Cityline attributed about 20% of the cases it examined to bots or unauthorised software and said it had reported the matter to the police.

20. Better Online Ticket Sales (BOTS) Act of 2016 (United States), Public Law 114-274, 14 December 2016; Federal Trade Commission, "BOTS Act compliance: Time for a refresher?", 11 April 2025. The Act prohibits circumventing ticketing controls that enforce purchase limits; it does not prohibit all automated purchasing.

21. Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (Singapore), "Ticketing arrangements by the Kallang Group", written parliamentary reply, 5 May 2026: providers are selected by open tender against requirements including queue management, bot protection, scalability and secure ticket delivery.

22. Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance (Cap. 172), section 6, which since E.R. 4 of 2021 provides for a fine at level 1 rather than naming the amount; level 1 is $2,000 under Schedule 8 to Cap. 221. For the figure and its 1950 origin see Legislative Council Secretariat, *Ticket scalping in Hong Kong*, ISE04/18-19, and "LCQ15", written reply, 8 January 2025.

23. "LCQ6: Combating ticket scalping", written reply, 11 April 2018.

24. "LCQ15", written reply, 8 January 2025.

25. Places of Public Entertainment (Exemption) Order (Cap. 172D), L.N. 175 of 2002, commencing 15 January 2003, exempting LCSD- and Home Affairs-managed places from sections 4 and 11 of the Ordinance. Section 6 applies to a place licensed under the Ordinance; on the consequence for LCSD venues see "LCQ14: Combating ticket scalping activities", written reply, 21 March 2018.

26. Leisure and Cultural Services Department, press release on ticketing arrangements at the Hong Kong Coliseum and Queen Elizabeth Stadium, 9 April 2019, effective July 2019.

27. RTHK report of Leisure and Cultural Services Department data, 29 December 2023, carried by Yahoo News Hong Kong. The data cover 2021/22 to November 2023.

28. "LCQ19", written reply, 7 May 2025.

29. Government press release on the transfer of the Government's interests in AsiaWorld-Expo to the Airport Authority, 31 March 2022.

30. Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Hong Kong Coliseum, *First Schedule of Terms and Conditions of Hire (Reservation Fees, Hire Charges, Reimbursable Charges and Rights Fees)*; and *Booking Arrangements and Guidelines (Arena and Piazza)*, in force 1 August 2025.

31. Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Queen Elizabeth Stadium, *Booking Arrangements and Guidelines for Major Facilities (Arena and Distribution & Exchange Lobby)*, with effect from 1 August 2025, and *First Schedule of Terms and Conditions of Hire*; seating capacity from the stadium's hiring information page.

32. Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Ko Shan Theatre, booking arrangements and New Wing pages.

33. Hong Kong Playground Association, MacPherson Stadium, concert and hire-details pages (macstadiumhkpa.com), which give a concert capacity of about 2,000 and require a Hong Kong-registered hirer.

34. For an example of a published hold-and-challenge mechanism, see The GRAND, "Venue Holds & Challenging Policy": up to four ranked holds on a date, first refusal for the first hold, and confirmation or release within two business days of a challenge. The touring requirements in Table 3 describe operational needs, not uniform contractual terms at every venue.

35. "LCQ1: Hosting international pop concerts", oral reply of the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, 24 January 2024.

36. Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Hong Kong City Hall and Hong Kong Cultural Centre, booking arrangements for major facilities, both with effect from September 2025.

37. *The Chief Executive's 2025 Policy Address*, paragraphs 175 and 182, 17 September 2025.

38. "LCQ19: Making optimal use of performance venues for hosting mega events", written reply of the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, 18 December 2024. Applications and utilisation figures for 2024 cover 1 January to 30 November.

39. "Kai Tak Sports Park marks first anniversary", *The Standard*, 1 March 2026, reporting the park's first-year figures.

40. Authors' calculations from the tour dataset: the sampled Coliseum tours account for 20 performances by Andy Lau, 9 by Eason Chan and 44 by Jacky Cheung within the study window, totalling 73; 204 Hong Kong performances across 64 tours, or 3.19 per visit; 27 performances across 20 Western tours, or 1.35. See Online Appendix Table B1.

41. Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs, *Progress Report on Kai Tak Sports Park*, LC Paper No. CB(2)1266/18-19(01), 23 April 2019, setting out the operator's key performance indicators.

Acknowledgement

This memo was produced with funding and collaborative input from SV Vision Limited (8429.HK). The analysis, conclusions and recommendations are HKFEI's own and reflect its independent, evidence-based judgement; they do not represent the views of SV Vision.