

**Independent Committee in relation to the fire  
at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po**

**WRITTEN OPENING ADDRESS OF COUNSEL FOR THE  
INDEPENDENT COMMITTEE**

**A. Introduction**

1. The fire in Wang Fuk Court on 26 November 2025 was one of the gravest tragedies to have occurred in Hong Kong. It was the deadliest fire in Hong Kong since 1948. The fire burned for over 43 hours and engulfed 7 apartment blocks. A total of 168 people lost their lives, and more than 4,000 residents were displaced from their homes. In the months since the fire, the whole of Hong Kong has mourned those who have lost their lives.
2. The tragedy has left a permanent scar in our collective memories. On behalf of the legal team, we extend our deepest sympathies to every family affected.
3. It is difficult to fathom a disaster on this scale occurring in Hong Kong. The fire demands close scrutiny of the vulnerabilities and shortcomings in the carrying out and supervision of large-scale renovation works.
4. It was against this background that, on 2 December 2025, the Chief Executive announced the establishment of the Independent Committee (“**Committee**”) in relation to the fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po.
5. The Terms of Reference set out the Committee’s task in four parts. In summary, the first paragraph of the Terms of Reference concerns what happened at Wang Fuk Court on 26 November 2025, why the tragic incident occurred and what factors led to the heavy casualties. The second paragraph seeks to examine whether there are wider systemic problems in the building maintenance and renovation sector. The third and fourth paragraphs concern the adequacy of existing regulations and penalties, and any recommendations for reform.

6. The Committee's work is intended to provide clarity and accountability, especially to those who were bereaved or who survived the fire.
7. Following any significant casualty, multiple legal processes will usually ensue. Ongoing criminal investigations have proceeded in parallel with the Committee's work. If a prosecution is brought, the determination of guilt will be a matter for the criminal courts. It is not the role of the Committee to establish civil or criminal liability. The Terms of Reference therefore exclude issues of legal liability from the scope of the Committee's work.
8. Subject to that limitation, the Committee will examine fully, fairly and transparently the issues falling within the Terms of Reference.
9. In seeking to establish the truth, the Committee may reach conclusions that are critical of certain parties. Where criticism is warranted, it will be made. Fairness requires that any party who may be affected be afforded an opportunity to be heard. To that end, the Committee has permitted the following involved parties to participate in the evidential hearing:
  - 9.1. Government departments:<sup>1</sup> represented by Mr Jenkin Suen SC, Mr Calvin Cheuk, Mr Michael Lok and Mr Charlie Liu, instructed by the Department of Justice.
  - 9.2. The Competition Commission and the Independent Commission Against Corruption ("ICAC").
  - 9.3. Urban Renewal Authority ("URA"): represented by Mr Mike Lui SC and Mr Ross Yuen, instructed by Messrs Wilkinson & Grist.
  - 9.4. ISS EastPoint Properties Ltd ("ISS"), the property manager of Wang Fuk Court: represented by Mr Richard Khaw SC, Mr Martin Ho and Mr Cedric Yeung, instructed by Messrs Hogan Lovells.

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<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the Fire Services Department, Police Force, Labour Department, Home Affairs Department, Housing Department and Buildings Department.

- 9.5. Director of Will Power Architects Company Ltd (“**Will Power**”),<sup>2</sup> the consultant for the renovation works at Wang Fuk Court: represented by Mr Patrick Lau, instructed by Messrs Hon & Co.
- 9.6. Directors and authorised signatory of Prestige Construction & Engineering Co., Ltd (“**PC&E**”),<sup>3</sup> the main contractor for the renovation works at Wang Fuk Court: represented by Messrs Lau Pau & Co.
- 9.7. Victory Fire Engineering Ltd (“**Victory Fire**”), one of the registered fire service installation contractors at Wang Fuk Court: represented by Messrs Munros.
- 9.8. Members of the 12<sup>th</sup> Management Committee of the Incorporated Owners (“**IO**”) of Wang Fuk Court:<sup>4</sup> represented by Mr Laurence Li SC and Ms Denise Or, instructed by Messrs O Tse & Co.
- 9.9. Hop On Management Company Ltd, the administrator of the IO of Wang Fuk Court.
- 9.10. Certain residents of Wang Fuk Court: six residents are represented by Messrs Ho Tse Wai & Partners,<sup>5</sup> whereas two other residents are unrepresented.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Messrs Hon & Co are acting for Mr Wong Hap Yin.

<sup>3</sup> Messrs Lau Pau & Co are acting for Mr Hau Wa Kin, Mr Ho Kin Yip and Mr Wong Chung Kee Steve.

<sup>4</sup> The members are Mr Tsui Moon Come Tony, Mr Mak Chi Hung, Mr Ho Chung Hang, Ms Cheung Tsz Wan, Ms Lam Wai Man, Ms So Sin Ting, Ms Fung Ching Yan Carol, Mr Xie Baosen, Mr Chan Man Ho, Mr Mak Chi Sing, Mr Li Yat Hing, Ms Tang Ka Yan and Mr Law Wing Lun.

<sup>5</sup> The residents represented by Messrs Ho Tse Wai & Partners are Mr Kong Cheung Fat, Ms Lo Hiu Kei Phyllis, Mr Lo Hiu Kin, Mr Yip Ka Kui Sdanni, Mr Yip Shun Ting and Mr Lee Kwok Hung.

<sup>6</sup> The unrepresented residents are Mr Leung Ho Hin and Ms Chow Yim Ling.

## **B. The Committee's Work to Date**

10. The Committee and its legal team have undertaken extensive work since its establishment on 12 December 2025:
  - 10.1. On 23 December 2025, the Committee and its legal team conducted a site visit to Wang Fuk Court.
  - 10.2. On 26 January 2026, the Committee announced a public invitation to provide information concerning the causes and circumstances that led to the fire, its rapid spread and related issues.
  - 10.3. On 5 February 2026, the Committee held a direction conference. The Rules of Procedure were issued that day.
  - 10.4. On 13 February 2026, the Committee appointed Professor Asif Usmani and Professor Jiang Liming to assist the Committee as independent experts.
  - 10.5. Over the past few months, the Committee made numerous requests for information to Government departments, contractors and consultants. In response to those requests, a significant volume of evidence has been provided.
11. The volume and scope of the evidence reviewed by the Committee since December 2025 is substantial.
  - 11.1. The Committee has received nearly 1 million individual documents (including numerous photos and videos) from Government departments, law enforcement agencies, contractors and members of the public. The data collected exceeds 1 terabyte.
  - 11.2. The Committee has obtained materials seized by law enforcement agencies, including hours of CCTV footage from the day of the fire, materials seized from the management office at Wang Fuk Court

and instant messages of evidential significance sent between contractors.

- 11.3. The Government has also disclosed internal records regarding the supervision of the works and follow-up actions in response to the many complaints made by residents about Wang Fuk Court's renovation works.
- 11.4. The Committee has received hundreds of statements from Wang Fuk Court residents, security guards, construction workers, police officers and firefighters. More than 350 public forms have been collected. Formal witness statements have also been submitted by Government departments and contractors.
12. The Committee and its legal team have worked intensively in the past few months to review the mass of evidence. It has sought evidence from all quarters that may be relevant to its inquiry, and has made further requests where necessary to test, clarify and supplement the materials provided.
13. These efforts are ongoing. The Committee will be announcing a public invitation to provide information concerning issues of bid-rigging corruption, improper collusion and other systemic issues in the building maintenance and renovation sector. Further requests for information are likely to be issued, even as the evidential hearing progresses.

**C. The Evidential Hearing**

14. In the first few days of the evidential hearing commencing on 19 March 2026, Counsel for the Committee will present the evidence to assist the Committee and the public in understanding the matters under inquiry.
15. After the opening addresses, the Committee will hear from residents and surviving family members, firefighters, police officers, contractors, sub-contractors, property management personnel, and officers from relevant

Government departments and agencies. It is anticipated that more than 50 witnesses will testify in person.

16. The Committee will also hear opinion evidence from Government experts and the Committee's own experts on the cause of the fire, its rapid spread and the resulting casualties and property damage.
17. In the following address, key issues to be explored in the evidential hearing will be briefly introduced. It should not be taken as expressing the view of the Committee on any disputed issue.

**D. The Fire and its Rapid Spread**

18. On 26 November 2025, internal painting and repair works were largely complete, and the replacement of the external wall tiling of all eight blocks was under way. It was relatively dry and breezy. A red fire danger warning had been issued.
19. On the evidence presently available, the fire originated from the flat roof at the bottom of the light well outside Flats 104 and 105 of Wang Cheong House. CCTV footage and videos taken by members of the public point consistently to that location as the place where the initial fire took hold.
20. The CCTV recordings suggest that the fire was first discovered by workers between about 14:42 and 14:45 on 26 November 2025. The first emergency call was made to 999 at around 14:50.
21. On the presently available evidence, the Government's Fire Investigation Taskforce believes that a likely cause of the initial fire was a lighted cigarette igniting nearby combustible material at the flat roof outside Flats 104 and 105 of Wang Cheong House. Before any final conclusion is reached, the Committee will need to consider the final report of the Taskforce together with the evidence of Government experts and the Committee's own independent experts.

22. While there is no direct evidence of the initial ignition, the circumstantial evidence points to smoking as a possible cause.
  - 22.1. The debris excavated at the origin of the fire contained burnt remnants of carton paper boxes and other rubbish, together with cigarette ends.
  - 22.2. There is audio recorded at the site shortly before the fire in which a worker can be heard saying “邊個食煙...呀?”.
  - 22.3. There is evidence on CCTV of smoking by worker on the day of the fire, and there were repeated complaints from residents about smoking on the scaffolding before the incident.
23. It may ultimately not be possible to determine with certainty how the fire began. However, the pressing question is why the fire developed into a catastrophe of this scale.
24. The speed of the subsequent spread of the fire was striking:
  - 24.1. By 14:56, the fire had spread rapidly up the light wells of Wang Cheong House.
  - 24.2. Within a short time after that, it had reached other façades of Wang Cheong House.
  - 24.3. Within minutes more, the fire spread to Wang Tai House, and thereafter to Wang Shing House, Wang Kin House, Wang Sun House, Wang Tao House and Wang Yan House.
  - 24.4. By about 16:04, seven of the eight blocks had caught fire.
  - 24.5. The façade fire had penetrated into flats on multiple blocks. The fire continued to burn overnight and into the following day. The

firefighting operations were only finally declared complete at 10:18 am on 28 November 2025. The fire had burned for over 43 hours.

25. The internal conditions in Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House deteriorated at an alarming rate. There is evidence of smoke penetrating corridors and staircases in Wang Cheong House by around 14:55, and in Wang Tai House shortly after 15:14, with conditions becoming untenable within minutes on certain floors.
26. The Committee will hear fuller evidence in relation to the spread of the fire from CCTV footage, residents, firefighters and the experts.

**E. The Heavy Casualties and Property Damage**

27. Not every fire leads to casualties at a catastrophic scale. It may not be possible to eradicate all possible sources of ignition, many of which are caused by accidents. In 2024, there were 5,222 damaging fires which claimed 33 lives and injured 449 persons.
28. Compared with these statistics, the casualties at Wang Fuk Court are staggering. The evidence of the Police and the Fire Services Department is that there were 168 fatalities and 79 injuries.
29. The 168 fatalities included residents, domestic helpers, construction workers, visitors and one firefighter. They ranged from 6 months to 98 years of age. The distribution of casualties is also significant and will be examined closely in the evidential hearing:
  - 29.1. The vast majority of casualties occurred in Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House (163 fatalities and 47 injuries), being the first buildings to catch fire.
  - 29.2. Many of the fatalities in Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House were found inside flats, but a substantial number were also found in staircases.

- 29.3. By contrast, Wang Sun House suffered severe fire damage but relatively fewer fatalities. Wang Shing House, Wang Kin House and Wang Yan House saw few casualties. Possible reasons include later spread of the fire and differences in the time available for evacuation.
30. The property damage was extensive. Overall, of the 1,736 units on the 7 affected blocks, 924 units sustained different levels of fire damage. Some flats were completely burnt out, while neighbouring flats were unaffected.
31. Counsel for the Committee can already say this with confidence: there is evidence of serious failures in multiple fire safety measures that ought to have protected life. The evidence reviewed gives rise to serious concerns in at least the following respects:
- 31.1. The fire alarm systems had been turned off in seven of the eight blocks. That failure delayed the alerting of residents to the fire and reduced the time available for safe evacuation.
- 31.2. Windows in staircases had been temporarily removed to create openings through which workers could gain access to the external scaffolding. On the evidence presently available, this appears to have allowed smoke and fire to enter and spread through the very escape routes on which residents depended.
- 31.3. There is evidence that the fire hydrant / hose reel systems had been shut down for months. Residents tried to use hose reels but were unable to do so.
- 31.4. There is evidence that substantial quantities of flammable materials were present on the façade of the buildings. After typhoon damage, scaffolding safety nets were replaced with safety nets that were combustible rather than with the fire retardant nets required by law. Flammable foam boards were used to cover windows, potentially facilitating the spread of fire into apartments.

32. A particularly important issue is the tenability of the means of escape. If smoke and fire had penetrated the staircases and corridors at an early stage, the time available for safe escape would have been drastically reduced. If warning had been delayed because the fire alarms were inoperative, or because residents could not see the fire outside their windows, the time required for safe escape would have increased correspondingly.

**F. Emergency Response**

33. The Committee has also received evidence regarding the emergency response on the day. The first 999 call was made at around 14:50. Seven fire appliances, including one turntable ladder, were dispatched. Those appliances arrived between about 14:56 and 15:01. Further appliances followed. The fire was raised to a No. 3 alarm fire at 15:02, to a No. 4 alarm fire at 15:34, and to a No. 5 alarm fire at 18:22. By 22:30, 174 fire appliances and 47 ambulances, involving 989 firefighters, had been dispatched to the scene.
34. The scale of the response was substantial. But serious questions remain as to the means by which residents were alerted to the fire, the handling of emergency calls, and the firefighting response itself. For example:
- 34.1. The Committee will examine whether more could or should have been done to alert residents in blocks beyond Wang Cheong House, whether alternative warning systems were available, and whether the widespread failure of alarms materially delayed evacuation.
- 34.2. The Committee will also examine the handling of 999 calls in the early stages of the incident, when call centres were understandably flooded, and whether delays in answering or conference transfer may have had practical consequences for trapped residents.
- 34.3. The Committee will also examine the deployment of fire appliances and personnel to Wang Fuk Court, to consider whether more could

or should have been done to stop the fire from spreading among buildings or to extinguish the fire within a shorter period of time.

35. Finally, the Committee will hear evidence about the death of Fireman Ho Wai Ho, who sacrificed his life in the course of his duties. His death was deeply tragic. The Committee will consider, with appropriate care and respect, the circumstances in which he came to be trapped and the conditions he faced before his demise.

**G. Roles of Various Parties in the Use of Materials and Fire Safety**

36. The Committee is directed by the Terms of Reference to examine the roles and responsibilities of various parties, in particular, whether there was adequate supervision of the renovation works and whether the construction safety requirements and standards were adequate.
37. Based on the evidence reviewed thus far, a number of systemic issues have already been identified. They are unacceptable and cannot be ignored.

**G1. Smoking on site**

38. Whether the initial fire was in fact caused by a lit cigarette, smoking by workers was a matter of repeated concern by residents.
39. The contractors put up signs prohibiting workers from smoking and stipulating consequences if they were caught. Yet the practice continued.
40. The Committee will hear evidence in the form of photographs and videos taken by residents of workers smoking in and around the scaffolding, CCTV footage of a worker smoking shortly before the fire and repeated complaints made by the residents.
41. The Labour Department was alerted to these concerns as early as July 2024. It conducted multiple inspections but repeatedly concluded that the residents' complaints "*could not be justified*" because no workers were

seen smoking during their visits. The Labour Department also stressed that public safety matters did not fall within the scope of its occupational safety legislation.

42. In one instance where a complaint was referred to the Fire Services Department, the response was that the matter did not fall within its jurisdiction.
43. The result was a regulatory vacuum. If the Labour Department would not deal with the risks posed by workers smoking on scaffolding, and the Fire Services Department would not either, who was to take responsibility?

G2. Construction materials and the regulatory framework

44. The Terms of Reference require an examination of whether the prevailing list of materials meeting safety standards is comprehensive, and whether the related verification and testing systems are effective. On the evidence presently available, there is a serious question as to whether either objective has been achieved.
45. In the case of Wang Fuk Court, the renovation project was treated as “Minor Works” and “exempted works”. This meant there was no requirement for Government approval or vetting of the choice or use of building materials before work commenced. The system relied instead on self-regulation by private registered professionals and contractors.
46. The problem is particularly acute in relation to temporary construction materials. Subject to the expert evidence, the presently available evidence suggests that many materials used to facilitate the works may have been combustible: bamboo scaffolding, safety nets, wooden planks, toe-boards, nylon strips and foam boards. Apart from certain requirements relating to safety nets and sheeting, there appear to be no specific standards or requirements governing the fire retardancy of many temporary materials of the kind that enveloped the buildings at Wang Fuk Court when the fire broke out.

47. That is not to say that general legal requirements, such as the Building (Construction) Regulations (Cap 123Q), did not apply to the use of combustible temporary construction materials. As we will hear in due course, different Governmental departments have adopted conflicting positions. The Independent Checking Unit of the Housing Department has at times suggested that temporary materials are not “building works” and therefore fall outside fire-retardancy requirements. By contrast, the Buildings Department’s evidence is that the use of flammable materials fixed across the exterior of residential buildings creates obvious additional fire hazards and may contravene statutory requirements.

G3. Scaffolding nets

48. Protective netting and sheeting on scaffolding have been subject to fire-retardancy requirements since May 1995. That requirement was well known within the industry, and was known to the contractors at Wang Fuk Court.

49. There is already an abundance of evidence to indicate that, after typhoon damage in July and September 2025, large quantities of cheaper, non-fire-retardant nets were acquired and used to replace damaged nets. This has been admitted by a sub-contractor (Gain Profit Shed Industry Ltd) and its supplier, and is supported by materials seized by the Police.

50. There is also evidence of concealment or misrepresentation. The materials presently available suggest that outdated or inapplicable certificates may have been repeatedly produced as proof of compliance. There is also evidence of urgent acquisition of fire retardant nets shortly before an inspection by the Independent Checking Unit, and evidence that the inspection was pre-notified to persons connected with the contractor. These are matters of concern that will be examined at the evidential hearing.

51. The inspection regime itself gives rise to serious concern. There is direct evidence (including video clips taken during the inspection) which reveals

potential shortcomings in the Independent Checking Unit's inspection process.

52. The hearing will examine how non-fire-retardant nets came to be used, who knew of that fact, whether there was any deliberate concealment, and why the Labour Department and Independent Checking Unit failed to detect or stop it.

G4. Foam boards covering windows

53. The use of foam boards to cover windows raises another matter of concern. Minutes of a meeting between PC&E, Will Power and IO representatives show that, as early as 17 June 2024, concern was raised that foam boards were combustible and would produce a large amount of smoke in the event of fire. PC&E, the main contractor, nevertheless insisted on using foam boards, and Will Power approved that course.

54. Residents repeatedly complained about the foam boards. They went so far as to conduct and record their own burning tests. Complaints were made to 1823, to the Fire Services Department, to the Independent Checking Unit and others.

55. The response of the authorities was, once again, fragmented. The Fire Services Department took the position that fixing polystyrene boards to building windows during external wall maintenance fell outside its remit. The Independent Checking Unit's position, as noted above, was that the use of temporary foam boards did not constitute building works and was therefore not subject to any applicable fire retardancy requirement. No department carried out any testing of the boards' flammability. It appears that each regarded the matter as someone else's responsibility.

56. The evidential hearing will examine the extent to which the foam boards facilitated fire spread into flats, and the extent to which they blocked residents from seeing smoke and flame outside, thereby delaying evacuation at a critical moment.

G5. Fire service installations

57. The failure of active fire safety equipment is one of the central concerns arising from the evidence. Each block at Wang Fuk Court was equipped with a fire alarm system and a fire hydrant / hose reel system. Yet, the evidence shows that, on the day of the fire, the alarms in most blocks did not function, and the fire hydrant / hose reel systems had been shut down.
58. The evidence of Victory Fire is that, when repair works were undertaken in October and November 2025, it discovered that the fire water tanks were empty and later discovered that the main power switch for the fire pumps in all eight blocks had been switched off. On its own understanding, the main power switch also disabled the fire alarm systems. Should Victory Fire have done more in these circumstances to ensure that the fire alarm systems were operational, or at least to inform the Fire Services Department of the shutdown?
59. The evidence of China Status is more troubling still. It was engaged to submit shutdown notices in respect of the fire hydrant / hose reel systems to facilitate repairs to leaking water tanks. Its directors accept that, before submitting those notices, no representative of China Status attended Wang Fuk Court to understand first-hand the systems in place, the nature of the works proposed or the necessity of shutting down the system. The company simply completed and submitted the paperwork.
60. Thereafter, repeated extensions of time were sought and obtained from the Fire Services Department, with the result that the fire hydrant / hose reel systems remained shut down for months on end. Serious questions arise as to whether China Status properly reviewed the extension applications. If China Status had exercised any real scrutiny of the progress of the repair works, it may well have discovered that prolonged shutdowns were unnecessary, and that the fire alarm systems had also been disabled.
61. Once shutdown notices were received, the Fire Services Department was required to conduct on-site risk assessment and supervision. The hearing

will explore whether that supervision was adequate, whether the duration of the shutdowns was properly controlled, and whether the Department ought to have discovered that the fire alarm systems had been turned off.

62. ISS's role is also significant. Its own workman accepts that he was the person who switched off the main fire service power switch for all eight blocks, acting on his own understanding of what had to be done to empty the water tanks to enable the repairs. He was not, however, a registered fire service installation contractor. The hearing will examine ISS's responsibilities in this regard.

63. Overall, there is a *prima facie* case of failure at every stage of the management of the fire service installations: a failure to consider whether shutdown of fire service installations was truly necessary; a failure to notice, report or prevent the deactivation of the fire alarm systems; a failure to expedite the repair works; and, a failure to ensure that essential fire service systems were restored or reactivated in time.

G6. Access openings in staircases and means of escape

64. The access openings in the escape staircases are a topic of particular importance. Those staircases were the residents' protected route to safety in the event of fire. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that windows in the staircases were removed and replaced with makeshift wooden doors to allow workers and materials to move between the interior and the external scaffolding. Sub-contractors describe this as common practice.

65. On the evidence available, these openings were created every five floors, and the temporary doors were made of combustible materials. They were typically left open during the day, including at the time of the fire. The consequence was that smoke and heat from the external fire could enter the staircases directly, potentially compromising what should have been a protected means of escape.

66. The Buildings Department's evidence is that the creation of access openings in the staircases may have breached multiple fire-safety requirements. Yet, none of the Government departments, including the Independent Checking Unit and the Labour Department, both of which conducted numerous site inspections, identified or reported the access openings. That collective failure is unsatisfactory. The evidential hearing will examine the explanations offered for this lapse in supervision and the extent to which it contributed to the dangers residents faced.

## H. **Bid-rigging, Collusion and Systemic Issues**

### H1. The wider systemic picture

67. Paragraph 2 of the Terms of Reference requires the Committee to examine whether there are systemic problems in large-scale building renovation works. It is impossible, and inappropriate, for the Committee to draw conclusions on every case of bid-rigging or improper collusion in Hong Kong. Nor is it the Committee's function to determine civil or criminal liability in respect of the Wang Fuk Court project. Those are matters for law enforcement agencies and the courts.

68. However, it is very much within the Committee's remit to examine the evidence showing how such problems may arise, how safeguards may fail, and what reforms may be required to prevent recurrence.

69. To that end, the Committee has sought information from the public and from relevant bodies. It has also received assistance from the Competition Commission, ICAC and the Police. Those materials point in the same direction: the problems in the large-scale building renovation market may be widespread, systemic and longstanding.

70. The Committee will have seen the Competition Commission's written opening address. It describes a widespread, systematic and longstanding practice among a sizable number of building maintenance contractors manipulating the outcome of tenders for building maintenance works. Such

practices are sometimes facilitated by who are ostensibly independent but, in reality, may be aligned with particular contractors. The conduct extends beyond bid-rigging as such and includes price-fixing, market-sharing, cover bids, and the use of related companies to create the false appearance of competition.

71. The ICAC's materials and the Police's evidence also refer to corruption risks in relation to registered inspectors and consultants, the vulnerability of a small pool of professionals to improper influence, and intelligence or experience suggesting that certain parts of the market may be affected by organised or syndicate-led practices.

72. Whether, and to what extent, reforms are required is ultimately a matter for the Committee. But the materials reviewed to date make clear that the systemic issues plaguing the large-scale renovation market require serious and sustained attention.

## H2. Wang Fuk Court as an example of those concerns

73. The Wang Fuk Court tender process provides a concrete illustration of the concerns captured by paragraph 2 of the Terms of Reference. It begins with the appointment of Will Power as registered inspector and later as consultant under the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme. On both occasions, Will Power secured the appointments on bids materially below the average of the relevant tender submissions.

74. The subsequent tender for the appointment of PC&E as the main contractor raises even more serious concerns. The project attracted a large number of bids. The materials before the Committee suggest that some of the bidders had connections with PC&E, the contractor ultimately chosen. Those connections were not disclosed in the tender analysis report prepared by Will Power. The residents of Wang Fuk Court were entitled to an honest and transparent tender process. The Committee will hear evidence as to whether that is what they received.

75. The tender analysis report prepared by Will Power is misleading in a very material respect. It awarded PC&E full marks in the categories of litigation or conviction history, on the footing that PC&E had no litigation record in the past eight years. That was plainly wrong. PC&E had been convicted 24 times between 2017 and 2023 for occupational safety and health offences, and had been further convicted of misconduct in relation to illegal building works in 2023. Those convictions were matters of public record.
76. More troubling still is the evidence from a Will Power project manager that entries concerning PC&E's litigation or disciplinary background were removed, and the scoring altered, before the report was finalised. If that evidence is accepted, the materials placed before the owners were not merely incomplete but positively manipulated.
77. The extraordinary general meeting at which PC&E was appointed was itself controversial. Residents raised concerns over the number of votes counted, the obtaining and use of proxies, the inability to ask questions, and the handling of concerns over PC&E's background. Thereafter, complaints were made to a variety of Government departments. The general picture, however, is that those complaints were passed from one department to another, or back to the owners' corporation, without substantive resolution.
78. Questions also arise as to the role of the URA. Wang Fuk Court joined the URA's Smart Tender scheme. Yet, the URA did not conduct a review of the tender documents to check if the scores awarded by Will Power to PC&E were justified. While the URA explains that its role was a mere 'facilitator' and not a law enforcement agency, the URA accepts that the purpose of the Smart Tender scheme is to minimise the risk of bid-rigging. Has the scheme achieved that purpose when residents were misled by the concealment of conviction records and connections between contractors? The overall effect of the URA's involvement seems to have been to lend credibility to a flawed process which is still prone to abuse by undue interference, collusion, manipulation and bid-rigging.

H3. The role of the consultant and registered inspector

79. The evidence relating to Will Power's role is highly troubling.
80. Mr Ng Yeuk, Wilson was a director of Will Power. He was also the sole registered inspector at Will Power at the material time.
81. There is evidence to the effect that, in the period when Mr Ng acted as the sole registered inspector of Will Power, he was a full-time employee of another firm. Serious questions arise as to whether he was paid on a freelance basis to sign statutory forms and reports, rather than actually supervise the works. The evidence in this regard, including seized communications, will be examined in detail at the evidential hearing.
82. The implications extend well beyond Wang Fuk Court. The statutory scheme is predicated on registered inspectors acting as independent and competent professionals through genuine oversight. If registered inspectors simply rubber-stamp the work of contractors without real supervision, the integrity of the regime is severely undermined, and the interests of owners are prejudiced. The Committee will therefore need to consider not only what happened in the Wang Fuk Court case, but also the systemic vulnerability to abuse which the evidence reveals.

Dated 17 March 2026.

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