

**Gender gap**

Women under-represented in council **P6**

**Power struggle over trees**

Government makes decisions for the districts **P7**

**Candidate age limit:**

Ageist or practical **P22**

THE YOUNG REPORTER  
*magazine*

November 2015

**District Council Election  
2015**



# In This Issue

FRONT

## 4 Timeline

History of District Council



PROFILE

## 8 District Boundary Maps and Profiles

FEATURE

## 22 Hong Kong's election age limit: ageist or practical?

## 5 Graphic guide:

How to vote

## 6 The government gender gap: from District Council to Legco

FEATURE

## 18 Young candidates ready for the race

Faced with competition from veteran politicians, candidates in their 20s are determined to win in the election



## 20 Discontent with the government matters most in university students' votes

TYR poll on university-student voters said Occupy Movement will affect their votes

FEATURE

## 7 Elected councillors have little say in district affairs

Residents are reluctant to vote because the outcome won't make any difference

SURVEY

## 24 Who will take over the "super seats"?

The Young Reporter team talks to "super seats" law-makers about the future of the District Council (Second) functional constituency.



Previous issue explores the situation of old trees on roadsides in Hong Kong

## Letter from the Editor

# THE YOUNG REPORTER magazine

The Young Reporter editorial team was gathered in the 24-hour computer lab (more like a lounge) one day last week putting together this issue. I was researching the Electoral Affairs Committee statistics on voter turnout and watching one of my editors scrolling on his laptop on the sofa. I looked at the group and spontaneously asked, "Who in this room has actually voted?"

Among the dozen 21 and 22-year-old journalists-to-be, only one person --Joey, our copy editor--had voted in a by-election at South Horizons, Southern District West last year. All the rest will be first time voters this November.

Writing an election issue with no voting experience is a double-edged sword. Having never experienced voting procedures, timelines and reporting regulations has to be compensated for with massive amounts of research and planning. But as university students, it is easier for us to relate

to young candidates and young voters. And, as a female-dominated group on a female-dominated campus, we are sensitive to gender issues in politics and workplace.

The system of appointed members is to be abolished starting from this election, making the District Council the only generally elected and most democratic part of the government in Hong Kong. The council itself though possesses very limited power, even on community policies and transparency in the way taxpayers' money is spent. The people in Hong Kong are increasingly aware of their rights in politics, partly credited to the Umbrella Movement, and further reform in the District Council shall soon be appealed.

Back in the lab (or lounge) one editor made the confession that she is not a registered voter and the guy on the sofa moved his stare away from the computer screen to her and let out a sigh.

**Crystal Tse**  
Editor

### Correction: Issue 1, October 2015

A feature on P.6-9 about the removal of the trees on Bonham Road, as the article correctly noted elsewhere, misstated that a 600-year-old tree instead of four 100-year-old trees were cut down.

Editor  
**Crystal Tse**

Deputy Editors  
**Thomas Chan**  
**Jane Cheung**  
**Harry Ng**  
**Viola Zhou**

Copy Editors  
**Mari Chow**  
**Jackson Ho**  
**Joey Hung**  
**Nathaniel Suen**

Social Media and Web Editors  
**Yanis Chan**  
**Shan Shan Kao**  
**Christy Leung**

Art Directors  
**Amie Cheng**  
**Jo Lee**  
**Kyle Sun**

Public Relation and Distribution Officer  
**Tina Cheung**  
**Kumiko Lau**

Advisers  
**Robin Ewing**  
**Jenny Lam**

Design Adviser  
**Wade Chan**

Publisher  
**Alice Lee**

Section Editors  
**Tsui-see Au Yeung**  
**Cora Chan**  
**Catherine Chen**  
**Natasha Fernandes**  
**Anne Lau**  
**Joanne Lee**  
**Airis Lin**  
**Iverson Ng**  
**Jennie Tang**  
**Joanna Wong**  
**Hilary Wu**

Reporters  
**Aaron Au**  
**Choco Chan**  
**Jonathan Chan CL**  
**Jonathan Chan CY**  
**Michelle Chan**  
**Phoebe Chau**  
**Herbert Cheung**  
**Kary Hsu**  
**Alvin Kor**  
**Arisa Lai**  
**Fred Lai**  
**Rainie Lam**  
**Ann Li**  
**Hilda Lo**  
**Lindsay Long**  
**Sharon Shi**  
**Janet Sun**  
**Anna Tang**  
**Candice Tang**  
**Sharon Tang**  
**Flavia Wong**  
**Natalie Wong**  
**Phoebe Wong**  
**Julieana Wu**  
**Catherine Xu**  
**Charlotte Yang**  
**Terrance Zheng**

The Young Reporter  
Volume 48 No. 2  
2015

Printer  
**Department of Journalism**  
**School of Communication**  
**Hong Kong Baptist**  
**University**

E M A I L  
[editors@tyr.hk](mailto:editors@tyr.hk)  
W E B S I T E  
[tyr.hk](http://tyr.hk)





# History of THE DISTRICT COUNCILS



**Founded** **1982**

The first ever local elections commence under the new creation of 18 district boards.

**Post-Handover** **1999**

The former District Board was replaced by provisional District Board.

**1994**  
**Change in the Voting Age**

**21** » **18**

**2005**  
**Expansion of responsibility**



Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen expanded the power of District Council in his first policy address to the management of district facilities.

**2000**  
**Replacement**

District Council was established to replace the provisional District Board.

**2011**

**Allegations of vote-rigging**

Most reported cases involved registered voters with multiple surnames under the same address.



**2012**  
**Establishment of Super Seats**



Elected members of District Council can run for five super seats\* in LegCo.

\*Known as District Council (Second) functional constituency

**2015**  
**Post-Umbrella Movement**

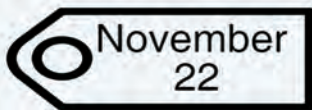


All appointed seats were abolished with more young candidates flushed out after the social movement.



# HOW TO VOTE

## 9 things you must know



Remember the day!



Bring your ID card



Go to your assigned polling station written on the polling card



Chan Tai Man



Do not use your own pen to mark on the ballot paper



You will receive a piece of ballot paper, a paper board, and with a chop bearing a tick.



Fold the ballot paper and put it into ballot box



Go to the Presiding Officers if you have any problems



The candidate receives the largest number of votes wins

## FEATURE

# The government gender gap: from District Council to LegCo

Everyday at 9 pm at Winnie Poon Yam Wai-chun's office in Kowloon Bay, Mrs Poon's husband waits for her to finish so they can go to the market together to pick up ingredients for dinner that Mrs Poon will cook.

Today, an elderly man is asking Mrs Poon where to get a vaccination. A woman drops by, home from her holiday in Malaysia, and hands Mrs Poon's assistant a packet of pastries. They have a brief chat and she soon leaves.

Mrs Poon, 61, is the district councillor of Telford Garden in Kowloon Bay. She was elected in 1985 to the then District Boards, which was renamed the District Council in 2000.

For the past 30 years, Mrs Poon has worked seven hours a day, five days a week advising her neighbourhood. She is a social worker by profession, wife to a civil engineer and a mother of three.

"I was like taking three jobs at the same time," Mrs Poon said, recalling the early days of her career when her children were small.

"Being a district councillor is very hard," she said. "It's even harder for a woman."

In the previous District Council, female councillors made up 23 per cent of all members, the highest proportion of women ever, according to the Home Affairs Department. In the current council, it dropped to about 21 per cent. That means there are 89 women compared to 418 men for the 18 districts.

However, the number of female registered voters exceeded that of male in 2015 with about 1.9 million women to about 1.8 million men. A survey by the Women's Commission also shows that women tend to engage more in community activities, which the District Council deals with, compared to men.

"Women's issues are ignored nowadays," said lawmaker Emily Lau Wai-hing, who has been elected five times to the Legislative Council since 1991.



Poon Yam Wai-chun

The under-representation of women causes basic female-interest policies, for example constructing breast-feeding facilities for mothers in public, hard to pass, said Ms Lau.

"Nobody ever comes to me with a problem about women's interests," she said. "People all care about education, welfare and other things."

Ms Lau said more women should join policy making in Hong Kong and diversity in gender would lead to better decision making in society.

Yum Kwok Tung, who will be running in the November election for Kowloon City, said gender matters little in an election.

"Maybe some female candidates are more relatable, but generally speaking there's not much difference between males and females when it comes to the poll," he said. Although the survey conducted by the

Women's Commission found that 40 per cent of the respondents agreed that men performed better in political leadership than females, whereas women performed better in community service. This puts the increasingly politicised District Council in an odd position.

"Hong Kong is still a Chinese society," said Odalia Wong Ho Ming-hung, a professor of gender studies at Hong Kong Baptist University. "It's very hard for us to get rid of the concept that 'men rules the outside world whilst women take care of the household.'"

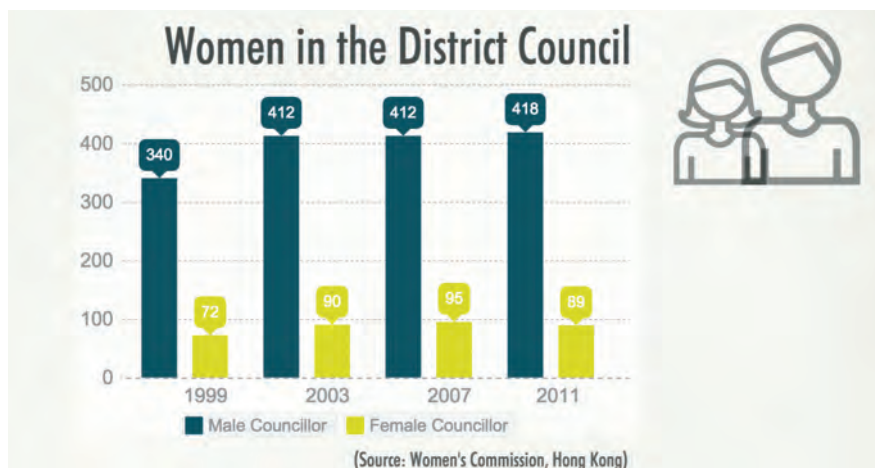
Family support is especially important for women who pursue politics, said Ms Lau.

Mrs Poon agreed. "I wouldn't have made it without the support of my family and my husband's family," she said.

Mrs Poon's eldest child is now 36. "Although sometimes I feel that I've missed something with my children," said Mrs Poon, "I wonder if they could have turned out any better if I had spent more time with them."

"I'm proud of my husband and my marriage. And having his surname Poon in front of my name doesn't mean I'm any lower than men," she added. "Being somebody's wife is a nice identity."

By **Julieana Wu**  
Edited by **Natasha Fernandes**



# Elected councillors have little say in district affairs

Residents are reluctant to vote because the outcome won't make any difference.

Half an hour before six Banyan trees in Western District on Hong Kong Island were chopped down in August, Central and Western district councillor Wong Kin-shing received an email. Although he was fully aware of the opposition from the local community, there was nothing he could do to stop the trees from being removed.

"This is notifying, not consulting," Mr Wong said. "The government does not respect our district council."

Although they are directly elected by Hong Kong residents, district councillors have little say in government policies concerning local communities. The lack of power results in a low turnout rate in the council elections.

Mr Wong said the Highways Department, which was in charge of the removal of the trees, held two meetings with the district council. Councillors proposed several solutions such as trimming the leaves, but none of them was taken in the end.

"We are sad to see the District Council in this state," said Mr Wong, who will not run in the upcoming elections.

To enhance communication between the government and residents of Hong Kong, the former colonial government established the District Boards in 1982. In 2000, the Boards were renamed District Council.

The Home Affairs Department says on its website that District Council function as advisory bodies, giving suggestions to the government on matters affecting "the well-being of the people in the district." They also give advice on government programmes and the use of public funds as well as public facilities.

If funds are allocated, the District Council should use them to improve the environment, spend on community

activities or promote recreational and cultural activities within the district, the website says.

But some councillors doubt if their suggestions are taken seriously by the government.

"When it comes to government policies, the District Council is powerless as an advisory body," says Kelvin Sin Cheuk-nam, a Democratic Party candidate who is running for the Central and Western district in the upcoming elections.

He says when the Planning Department asked for their council's advice on the construction of 3,000 flats. But when most residents in the area voiced concerns over the lack of transportation arrangements through two consultation sessions organised by the District Council, the department refused to disclose further information regarding the project.

Mr Sin said when he asked the officials whether the plan would be scrapped or if the transport issues would be dealt with, the Planning Department offered no details.

Seeing no formal power in the District Council, many HongKongers will not bother to vote in the election held in November. The turnout rate of last election was 41.49 per cent.

Julian Lam Sai-fung, 20, who lives in the Kadoorie area of Kowloon City, said he would not vote because district councillors have no impact in his neighbourhood, although it is the first district council election he is eligible to participate in.

"Over the past few years, our district councillors have not brought any changes to our community," said Mr Lam. "Maybe there is nothing for [the councillors] to improve, which is why my vote does not matter."

Emily Lau Wai-hing, chairwoman of the Democratic Party, agrees that the "advisory role" of District Council explains the low turnout.

Speaking to a group of journalism students from Hong Kong Baptist University, Ms Lau says the lack of power also puts off aspiring politicians from running in the elections.

In this year's District Council poll, 66 seats have only one candidate running, while in 2011, 76 out of 412 seats were uncontested.

"Some people would say the District Council election is not meaningful, because councillors don't have power," Ms Lau says, "It is true."

But Mr Sin believes District Councillor can still serve their communities even though they have limited power. That's why he is continuing his election campaign.

He said instead of lobbying government officials, district councillors can help locals organise small-scale demonstrations if they want to make proposals.

"These movements will definitely have an impact on the government's decisions," Mr Sin said.

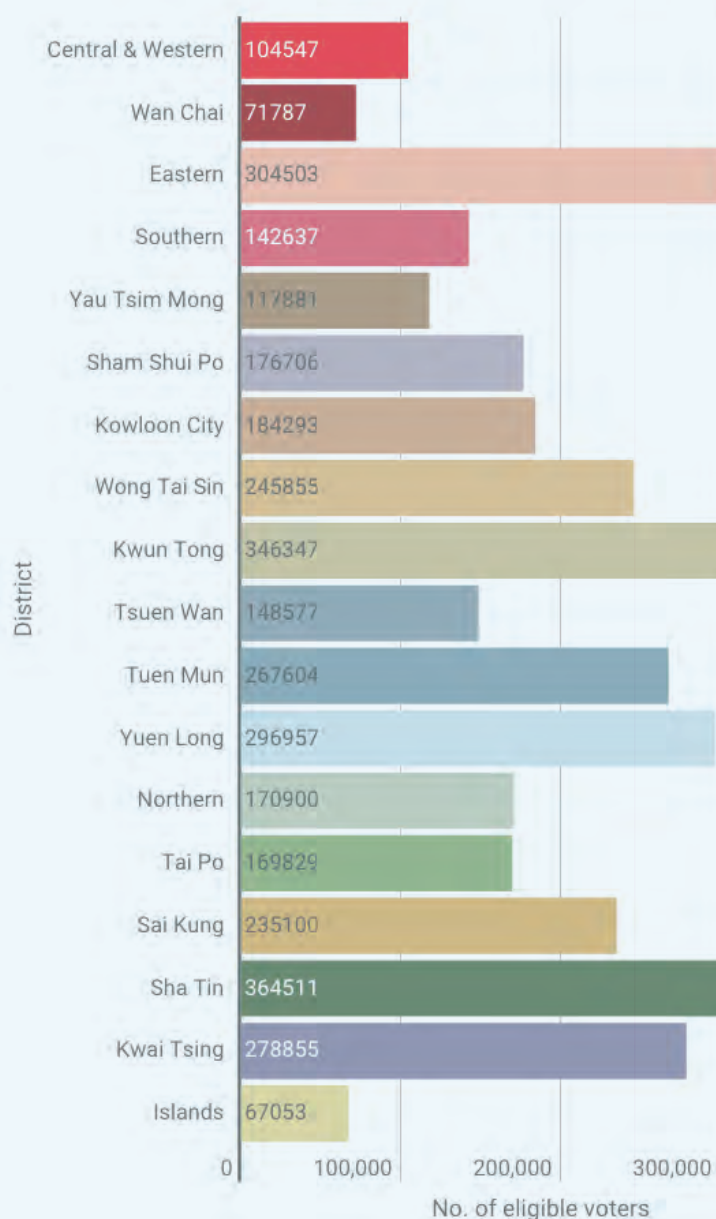


## DISTRICT PROFILE

# District Boundary Map

In the 2015 district council elections, 18 districts are divided into 431 constituencies. A total of 3.69 million electors will cast their votes on November 22. TYR highlights profiles in selected constituencies in each district and talks to some of the candidates.

## Eligible voters in 18 districts



Yuen Long



Tuen Mun



Tsuen Wan



Islands





North



x 18



x 36

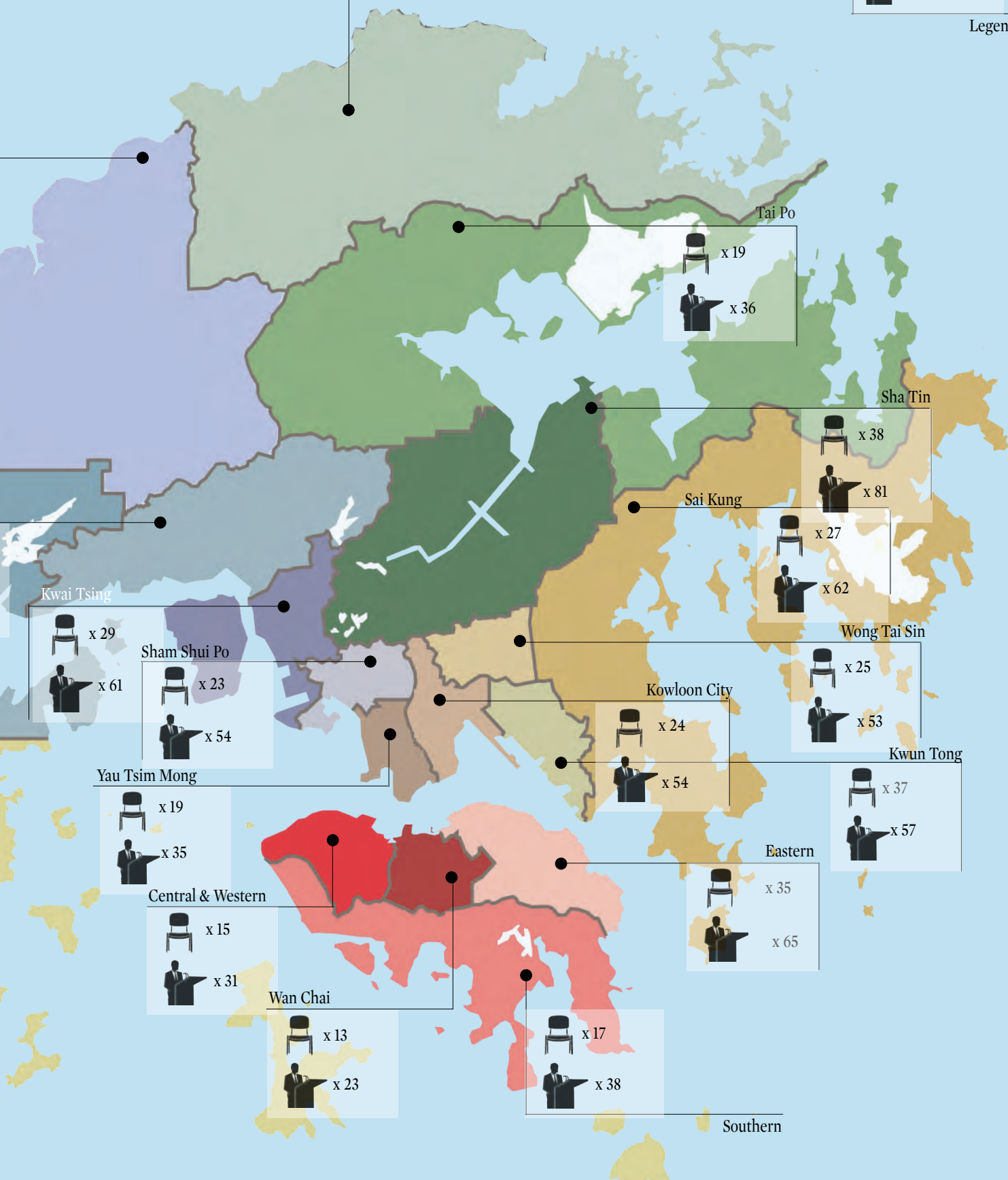


No. of  
constituencies



No. of  
candidates

Legend



# Central and Western

The government's sudden removal of four trees on Bonham Road in August sparked controversy. Tree conservation has since become an issue for district council election candidates.

Nelson Wong Kin-shing, current Central and Western District Councillor from the Democratic Party, disagrees with removal of the stone wall trees. He said the Highways Department did not consult the council beforehand.

"The District Council has the right to decide whether or not to remove the stone wall trees," said Mr Wong.

He thought the Secretary of the Central and Western District Council should have been informed before the Highways Department made decisions

on the stone wall trees in the district.

He pointed out that they could have cut back some of the branches to reduce the weight instead of chopping them down.

Mr Wong suggested the introduction of a tree ordinance to give the government a guideline on tree conservation.

But Chan Hok-fung, District Councillor from the DAB, disagreed that a tree ordinance was the answer. He believed that the root of the problem was the lack of tree conservation experts in Hong Kong.

"The Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section of Development Bureau should be responsible for the conservation of the trees, yet they have

little power as they mainly outsource projects to other companies", said Mr Chan.

"It means that the government is not really concerned about the development and conservation of trees in urban areas," he added.

*Candidates in Water Street*  
Yeung Hok-ming  
Bonnie Ng Hoi-yan

*Candidates of Kennedy Town and Mount Davis*  
Siu Cheuk-nam  
Chow Sai-kit  
Chan Hok-fung



*Blue House is a successful example of revitalisation of Tong Lau.*

# Wan Chai

Wan Chai District Council consists of 13 members from 13 constituencies with the addition of Tin Hau and Victoria Park constituencies from the Eastern District and the abolition of appointed seats in this year's election. Wan Chai District contains 160,000 residents and the voting turnout rate in Wan Chai District was only have 37.02 per cent in the 2011 election. The turnout was the lowest among 18 districts.

Conservation and revival of *tong lau*, walk-up tenement buildings, has long been a contended issue in Wan Chai district. Some buildings are too run-down and derelict. Although

they might not have significant historical values, some of them still lend much character to the city. Blue House is a very successful example of conservation and renovation. Sadly, there are still cases like the iconic Tung Tak Pawn Shop with over 80 years of history being obliterated..

Cheng Ki-kin, a district council election candidate, said the decision of conservation and revitalisation of the buildings lies in the hands of property owners. As the projects would require a huge amount of money, there would not be an easy way out.

"We would need to compensate the

property owners first and then we can start to talk about conservation," he said. "The discussion of conservation must be open to public. Government and Urban Renewal Authority should listen to the voice of local residents."

Besides negotiation with property owners, Mr Cheng said the councillors still needed to deal with the resettlement of residents. He emphasised the importance for the government to launch public consultation on this matter.

*Candidates of Hennessy*  
Cheng Ki-kin  
Cheong Man-lei

## Eastern

**E**astern District, which has the third biggest council size, faces criticism over the construction of two Quarry Bay rain shelters worth \$210,000 and a \$100 million Chinese opera house in Shau Kei Wan, with the former turned down.

Current district councillor and Civic Party member Joseph Lai Chi-keong said only half of the facilities in Eastern actually benefited residents.

But a pro-establishment councillor who declined to be named, citing legal reasons, insisted that all of the facilities were useful to residents.

"I will leave the judgment to the people because they are the users of those facilities," he said.

The pro-establishment councillor believed the council needed to work with the government on the project.

"Residents only care about how much is spent on the project but many of them have not read through the documents about the opera house," he said.

Mr Lai though believed the opera house will not be put to good use. "Several years ago, there was a temporary Chinese opera house in North Point but the usage rate did not reach the target."

He was concerned with how some groups could get money easily through the Council's vetting committee.

"We should gather the residents and monitor the district council's spending. Although many councillors declare their interests nowadays, some of them still vote in the vetting committee."

The pro-establishment councillor disagreed.

"I think the members know when to not vote and when to leave the meeting when dealing with their interests," he said.

*Candidates of Fei Tsui*  
**Li Lee**  
**Joseph Lai Chi-keong**  
**Lui Chi-man**

## DISTRICT PROFILE

## Southern

**B**eing the only district not covered by the railway network in Hong Kong, traffic congestion problems have long been an issue for Southern district.

During peak hours, Aberdeen Tunnel, the main route for people living in Southern District to connect with the other parts of the city, is in gridlock.

Kevin Tsui Yuen-wa said the increasing number of tourists going to Ocean Park was the main reason behind the serious traffic congestion in Wong Chuk Hang.

"Ocean Park does not bear any social corporate responsibility but focuses only on marketing strategies," said Mr Tsui.

Chan Fu-ming, the Chairman of the Traffic and Transport Committee in Southern district council, pointed out that the increasing number of hotels in the district, especially in Tin Wan and Wong Chuk Hang, accommodate more tourists and bring more coaches.

He said the new railway might not solve the problem because the number of

tourist coaches and the development in Tin Wan and Wong Chuk Hang district would probably counteract the effect brought by the railway.

He believed widening the main roads in the district is the only way to relieve the traffic jam. He will continue to work on solving the traffic congestion problem by urging the Highways Department to widen the main roads.

*Candidates of Wong Chuk Hang*  
**Chan Wing Yan**  
**Kevin Tsui Yuen-wa**

## DISTRICT PROFILE

## Yau Tsim Mong

**N**on-Chinese faces in Yau Tsim Mong District are not uncommon. According to Census 2011, more than 11 per cent of the population in the district belong to ethnic minority groups, which is six per cent higher than the city's average rate. District councillors put effort into improving the lives of the different ethnic groups and helping them integrate into the community.

Ethnic minority issues are part of the platform of candidates running in Yau Tsim Mong in the upcoming district

council election, putting emphasis on contributions to ethnic groups.

Benny Yeung Tsz-hei, one of the current councillors at Yau Tsim Mong, said ethnic minority residents should enjoy more space for cultural and religious activities.

He said he wanted to help ethnic minorities integrate into local communities.

But a group under the district council, Working Group On Care for Community,

is trying to stop candidates from hijacking the issue for political purposes.

"We want to build a caring community through cooperation with NGOs and encourage them to help vulnerable groups, such as the poor, the minorities and new arrivals in YTM," said chairman Mr Wong Man-sing said.

*Candidates of Yau Ma Tei South*  
**Au Yeung Tung**  
**Benny Yeung Tsz-hei**



## DISTRICT PROFILE

# Sham Shui Po

According to the annual hygiene report published by the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) in July 2015, Pei Ho Street located in Sham Shui Po is one of the hygiene blackspots with severe sanitation issue.

The report said garbage piled up next to the hawker stalls at the intersection between Pei Ho Road and Ki Lung Street and the odour was a nuisance for residents.

The DAB's investigative report suggested that the government should do more to improve the hygiene in Sham Shui Po, for

example, by employing more cleaners and cleaning the streets regularly.

Lau Pui-yuk is the DAB's incumbent district councillor of Nam Cheong Central constituency and the only candidate in the election so far. She said hygiene conditions improved for a short period of time following media reports but conditions became worse then.

*Candidates of Nam Cheong Central*  
**Lau Pui-yuk**  
**Mak Wai-ming**



*Pei Ho Street in Sham Shui Po is crowded. There are many food stalls and retail stores there.*

## DISTRICT PROFILE

# Kowloon City

Lead-in-water crisis is high on the agenda for Jay Li Ting-fung and Yuke Leung Yuen-ting who are running for Kai Tak North constituency.

Mr Li said he had urged the construction companies involved to bear responsibility. He suggested that the government could lower water charges and rental fees for the residents.

"We want the Legislative Council to establish an independent group to investigate the issue," he added.

Ms Leung criticised the government

for being slow to tackle the crisis. She thought remedial action such as installation of water purifier in the flats and changing water pipes should have started earlier.

"I want the government to help us install new water pipes as soon as possible. I really don't want to get the clean water downstairs every day," said Lau Min-zi, a resident in Kai Ching Estate.

Both candidates believe that the government should rebuild the trust of residents by testing the water quality at

public housing estates regularly..

Incumbent councillor of Kai Tak constituency Ronald Yeung Chun-yu believed the government should have a timetable to resolve the problem.

"I believe elected councillors will continue to focus on the water safety issue," he said.

*Candidates of Kai Tak North*  
**Leung Yue-ting**  
**Miranda Lam Hei-ting**  
**Chan Po-yuk**  
**Li Ting-fung**

## DISTRICT PROFILE

# Wong Tai Sin

Wong Tai Sin has the second most dense population in Kowloon, with the largest proportion of elderly people among all districts in Hong Kong.

According to Census 2011, among the 42 million residents in Wong Tai Sin, nearly 17% of them were aged over 65 years.

An aged population put a huge demand on medical services, especially on accident and emergency services.

However, no casualty department can be found in the district.

Hui Kam-shing, who has been the district council member in Chuk Yuen South constituency for 15 years, told TYR that Wong Tai Sin residents desired for a hospital with emergency services.

"Time is the key factor in saving lives when accidents happen. If residents have to be transported to other districts for medical treatments, it will take much longer and their condition may become worse," he said.

In 2013, Wong Tai Sin District Council formed a task force committee to improve medical facilities and proposed

setting up an accidents and emergency department at Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital in the district, but was rejected by the Hospital Authority.

"The authority thinks that there is not enough space at the site of the Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital to set up a new accidents and emergency department," said Mr Hui.

*Candidates of Chuk Yuen South*  
**Hui Kam-shing**  
**Chan Chak-sum**

## DISTRICT PROFILE

# Kwai Tsing

Older voters form a decisive bloc in Kwai Tsing District Council election.

Out of the 486,000 Kwai Tsing residents, 75 per cent live in Kwai Shing East Estate and Kwai Shing West Estate and most of them are 71 or older.

Chow Wai-hung said he targeted to serve elderly people. According to Mr Chow, a mobile dental care programme for elderly people has been introduced in the Kwai Tsing District.

He said the lack of dental services in the district has made it difficult for elderly people to get to healthcare centres. The scheme, he said, can benefit the whole district regardless of the constituencies.

He said that this was a special case and not all of the issues raised by councillors could be passed easily in a council. The problem, he believed is opposing political camps in the council.

"Some of the suggested plans were good, and I did not see the point of opposing them. But then they [pro-

establishment camp] had them vetoed," he explained.

Mo Sang-tung of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress said her party decided that she should not accept interviews after she announced her candidacy.

## Candidates of Kwai Shing East Estate

Chan Yuk-ling

Mo Sang-tung

Leung Kwok-Cheong

Rayman Chow Wai-hing

## DISTRICT PROFILE

# Islands

A central contention for Discovery Bay candidates is whether to open up bus services which is now monopolised by HKR International Limited - the main developer of the area in the mid-70s.

Current Islands district council member for Discovery Bay Amy Yung Wing-sheung said there were calls to break the monopoly and introduce more competition. A round trip between Sunny Bay and Discovery Bay now costs \$20.

"There was a meeting in which the interested groups and the developer discussed the possibility of introducing new bus service operators, but it was ended because the developer did not want to introduce competition," said Ms Yung.

Residents who do not welcome tourists disagree that there is a need for more means of transportation.

Chau Chuen-heung, current vice-chairman of Islands District Council, said that Discovery Bay was originally

developed for residential purposes but not tourism.

"As far as I know, residents are satisfied with the small community model and do not want to be disturbed by visitors," Ms Chau said.

## Candidates in Discovery Bay

Chiu Tak-wai

Amy Yung Wing-sheung

Hu Ziliang

By Herbert Cheung, Alvin Kor, Janet Sun, Rainie Lam, Ann Li, Catherine Xu, Natalie Wong, Aaron Au & Kary Hsu

Edited by Thomas Chan, Jackson Ho, Cora Chan, Airis Lin, Jennie Tang, Tsui-see Au Yeung, Shan Kao, Hilary Wu & Mari Chow



## CANDIDATES

# Young candidates ready for the race

Faced with competition from veteran politicians, candidates in their 20s are determined to win in the election.



*Kelvin Sin Cheuk-nam*

*Baggio Leung Chung-heng*



One year after the student-led Occupy Movement, some young democrats are bringing their political passion to the district council election. With the help of supporting groups, they are trying to challenge the established political parties and win over Hong Kong voters.

At the age of 21, Kelvin Sin Cheuk-nam is the youngest candidate the Democratic Party is fielding in the upcoming district council election. Mr Sin said a challenge he faces is the general perception that young people are inexperienced and incapable in politics.

“In my district, being young is definitely not an advantage,” said Mr Sin.

Mr Sin is running for a seat in the Central and Western District’s constituency of Kennedy Town and Mount Davis. Some of his opponents are much older than him.

One of them, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong candidate Chan Hok-fung, is 38 years old and has been working as a district councillor since 2008. Mr Sin believes voters are likely to support experienced politicians.

Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions vice-chairperson, Chan Yuen-han believes the pro-democracy young candidates will not pose a threat to the pro-establishment camp.

“Young people have a passion for politics,” said the 68-year-old legislator. “But they lack the ability to think and analyse the situation comprehensively like experienced politicians like us.”

Despite the obstacles, many young candidates are determined to run.

Baggio Leung Chung-heng, convenor of a new political group Youngspiration, said running for district councillor was not only about gaining seats, but to change people’s perception.

Youngspiration, which aims to become a voice for young people, are sending nine candidates aged from 23 to 29 to run in the election. The group positions itself as a “third power,” which means it neither belongs to the pro-Beijing camp nor the pro-democracy camp.





“We want to make an impression that offering giveaways is not the only promotional strategy for district councillors,” Mr Leung said. “Apart from serving the community, we work with all stakeholders in the community to create a better society.”

Mr Sin said young candidates have their own strengths. For example, young residents tend to vote for people of a similar age, whom they believe are more likely to understand their needs.

Since most of the young candidates from the post-Occupy groups lack of election experience, some organisations act as supporting groups for the aspiring young candidates.

A group named “80s Momentum” is one of them. The group was formed in April 2015 by the post-80s generation who stationed at Causeway Bay during the Occupy Movement. Its task now is to help new faces in the upcoming district council election.

“We also want to fight for democracy after the Occupy Movement, but being frontline fighters isn’t the only way,” said Kevin Ko Tim-fai, director of 80s Momentum.

Mr Ko said the group organised workshops and invited former councillors to share their experience and give advice.

“Equipping fellow young people with the skills to run for an election is how we fight for democracy after the protest,” said Anthony Cheong Yan-ying, another director of the organisation.



*Kevin Ko Tim-fai*



*Anthony Cheong Yan-ying*

By **Choco Chan, Jonathan Chan CY**  
 Edited by **Tina Cheung, Kumiko Lau**

## SURVEY

# Discontent with the government matters most in university students' votes

TYR poll on university-student voters said Occupy Movement will affect their votes.

More than three-quarters of university students will decide who to vote for in the district council election based on their dissatisfaction with the government's performance, according to a survey conducted by TYR.

The second determining factor for the poll in November is a wish to show their political stance, followed by hope for better services in their districts, conflict between Hong Kong and the mainland and the influence of social media.

Although 74 per cent of those asked said they supported the Occupy Central movement last year, 73 per cent felt the movement did not achieve what the organizers wanted. While 48 per cent said Occupy Central will affect whom they will vote for, it ranked fifth among other reasons.

The survey was conducted in early October. The questionnaires were sent out using Facebook and Whatsapp. Nearly all of the respondents said they were undergraduates (95%) and more

than 80 per cent of them were under 21 years old. 59 per cent will be voting for the first time.

Dr Martinez Lopez, associate professor of Public Policy at City University of Hong Kong, said a parallel should not be drawn between social movements and the election.

"Protests in the streets are about the mass and symbolic claims challenging the government, but elections are about individuals and political parties," he said.

Dr Lopez said local district elections were more related to the urban, social, economic, and political environment of a particular district.

However, about half of the respondents said the Occupy Central have an influence on their vote.

Deputy Secretary General of The Hong Kong Federation of Students Victor Wong Hon-leung reckoned that the Occupy Central movement has raised

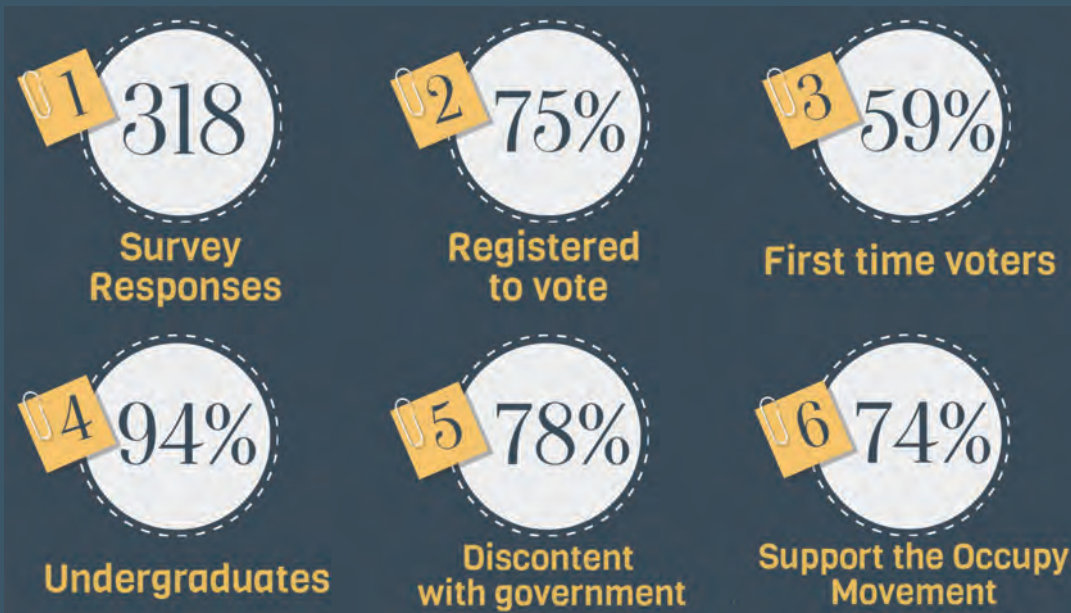
the political awareness among the young. He said the survey results prove that the government has lost the support of the younger generation after the Occupy Movement.

Professor of Public Administration of Open University of Hong Kong Dr Percy Lui Luen-tim said the movement has made youngsters feel powerless against the government.

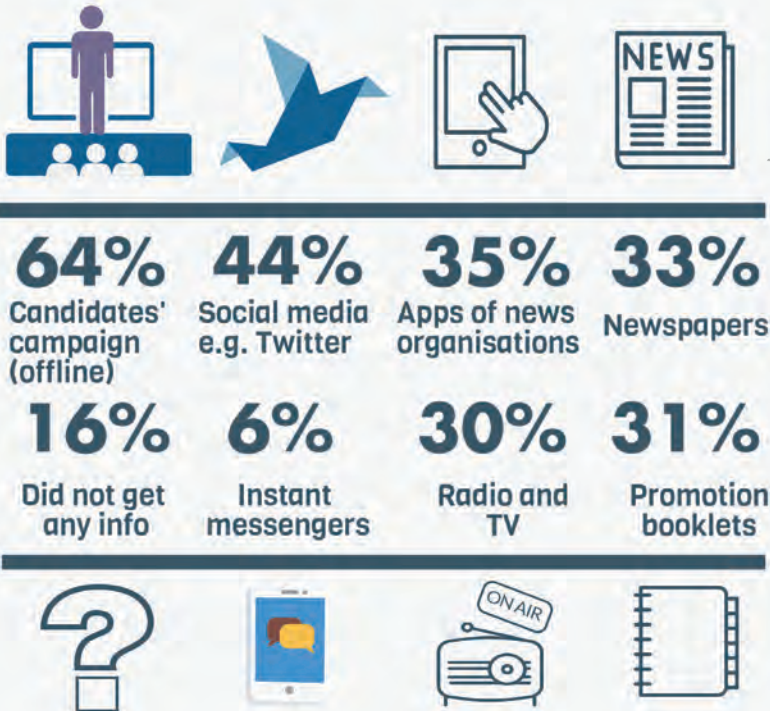
He said the youngsters' voices are being ignored, and other factors such as the widening wealth gap and low social mobility may also contribute to a general disappointment among the new generation.

"If university students remains indifferent to what is happening in the society, we have no hope," Dr Lui said.

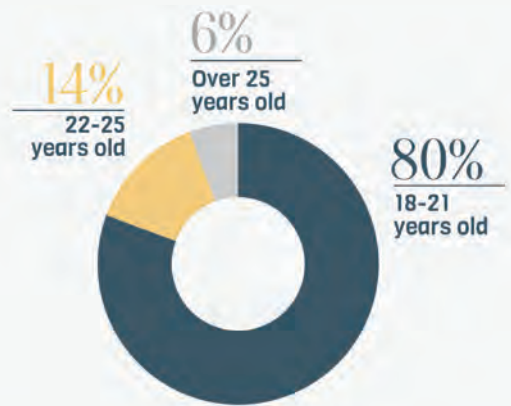
By **Fred Lai, Arisa Lai, Iona McNab & Terrence Zhang**  
 Edited by **Joey Hung, Catherine Chen & Amie Cheng**



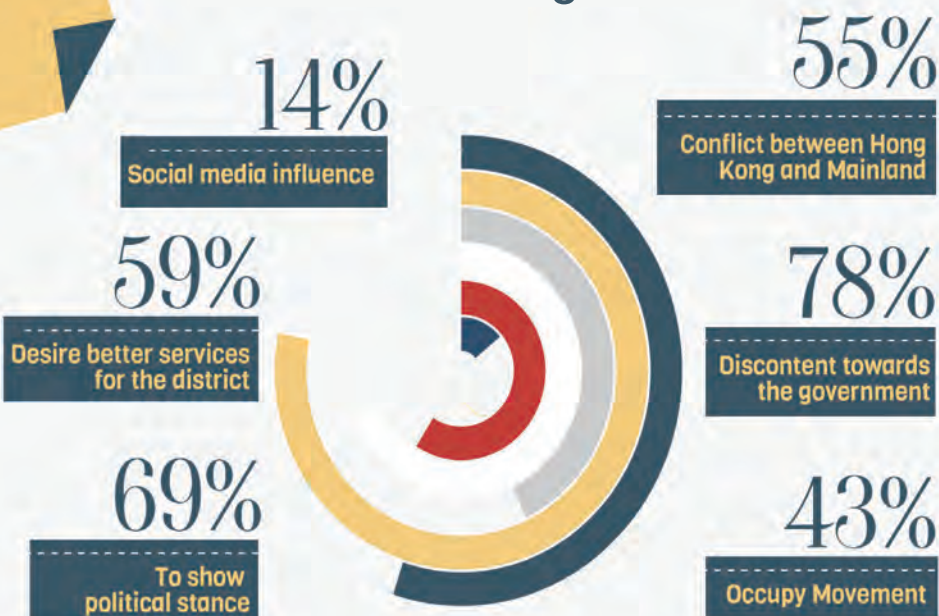
## Ways respondents find out about candidates



## Age composition



## Factors affecting voters





## FEATURE

# Hong Kong's election age limit: ageist or practical?

William Lloyd, formerly a British Conservative member of parliament, was elected at the age of 18 in 2007, a year after the eligible age for candidacy was lowered from 21.

"The simple fact of the matter is that no one has life experience completely, no one knows everything," Mr Lloyd told BBC.

In Hong Kong, the age limit for running in both the District Council or Legislative Council election is 21, though the age limit for voting is 18.

Joshua Wong Chi-fung said the age limit ignores 18 to 20-year-olds' right to stand for election.

The 19-year-old Scholarism convenor filed a judicial review to challenge the age ceiling on his birthday this month in hope to run in the LegCo election next year.

"It is quite ironic. For anyone running for the election of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the age limit is just 18 years old," said Mr Wong.

Responses are split, with critics arguing that young people below 21 lack life as well as political experience.

Albert Ho Chun-yan of the Democratic Party said Mr Wong's proposal lacks insight. "He could run for the election and criticise us, but legislators are elected. It's the voters' decisions," he said.

He said it is unfair to say older legislators in council elections constitute an ageing problem in Hong Kong politics. "Hillary Clinton is 68, Joe Biden is 72. Can you say there is an ageing problem in the US?" Mr Ho said.

"Of course we lack experiences, because we are still young," said 25-year-old Hsueh Cheng-yi, the youngest councillor in Taiwan. "But experiences can be accumulated when I am serving the community."

An environmental activist who is involved in several NGOs, Ms Hsueh said the Sunflower Student Movement -- a student-led protest against a trade treaty between Taiwan and China that failed to overturn the legislature's decision -- inspired her to make a change through the system.

"The experience made me realise we need somebody to step into the council and make a change while there are already enough NGOs catching public attention on different issues," she said.

In Taiwan, only residents aged 23 or above can stand for elections whilst the average age of the Legislative Yuan, Taiwan's legislature, is 52. To protest against the age limit,



*Hsueh Cheng-yi debates the use of agricultural land in Taiwan's council.*

Taiwanese under the age of 23 applied to run for the election last year but were all rejected.

"The more experienced the councillors are, the less willing they are in taking part in discussion of controversial topics," said Ms Hsueh. "Because they don't want to offend anybody at the cost of losing their seats."

Mr Wong of Scholarism also criticised the "severe ageing problem" in the Legislative Council during a radio show. The average age now for the Hong Kong's Legislative Council is 57 whilst that in District Council is 46.3.

Chung Kim-wah, associate professor in Social Sciences at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, said the age ceiling reflects society's perception of rights and responsibilities.

"Countries with higher age limits regard experience as a vital factor of considering if the candidate is suitable. But some consider that citizens have to bear their own legal responsibilities at the age of 18, which is a recognition of maturity," said Dr Chung.

He said young politicians, for example 20-year-old British MP Mhairi Black of the Scottish National Party, can deliver strong messages and therefore, society should not jump to the conclusion that young people cannot bear political responsibilities.

However, Dr Chung said he questions how much young politicians can actually change if on the council.

"You should not expect drastic changes if only one or a few young candidates are elected. But at least, there is youth representation voice in the council," said Dr Chung.

By **Christy Leung**  
Edited by **Crystal Tse**

**Write to us.**

*We will publish your letters in the  
magazine and on our website.*

***editor@tyr.hk***

*The Young Reporter  
run by HKBU journalism students since 1969*

## SUPER SEATS

# Who will take over the “super seats”?

The Young Reporter team talks to “super seats” lawmakers about the future of the District Council (Second) functional constituency.



## What are “super seats”?

The District Council (Second) functional constituency, “super seats,” was introduced in the 2012 Legislative Council election as a functional constituency. There are five seats, while the rest of the 28 only consist of one to three seats.

The implementation of the super seats were to make LegCo more democratic.

In the past, less than 230,000 out of 3.3 millions voters had an extra vote on functional constituency. Starting from 2012, the remaining 3 million people can cast a second vote on the candidate who is an elected district councillor.

The super seats were one of the products in the political reform passed in 2010. The government tried to

change the phenomenon that 6.71 per cent voters control half of the Legislative Council.



Starry Lee Wai-king, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong

## “District councillors should set examples for the people”



The MTR's by-laws leave a loophole allowing mainland parallel goods traders to transport their ware, while local students were caught bringing oversized musical instruments. On that debate, pan-democrats James To Kun-sun held a press conference to remind the MTR that there were similar issues seven years ago.

“The MTR bully the good people and fear the evil ones. It is crucial to speak up for people, and feel what they feel. This is what district councillors should do.”

“I have spent most of my time on improving the district, and this is my responsibility,” said Mr To.

For both the District Council and Legislative Council elections, members have to contribute to their communities in order to gain support, said Mr To.

The TYR team tried to contact Starry Lee Wai-king, the lawmaker from the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, but we failed to interview Kowloon City District councillor.



***While two seasoned “super seats” councillors attempt to step down to give younger members a chance, another two are still determined to win in the District Council election. They are pan-democrats Frederick Fung Kin-kee and James To Kun-sun.***

“There are no strategies to win the election but to be diligent. You would need to review what you have done if you cannot even get ten supporters -- the minimum requirement for nomination in the Legco election,” said Mr Fung, the former chairman of Hong Kong

Association for Democracy and People’s Livelihood (ADPL), as well a member of the Sham Shui Po District Council.

Having been a district councillor for nearly two decades, Mr Fung believes councillors need to follow-up on local

issues constantly and communicate with the neighborhood.

“I insist on making home visits once a week to know what is happening and to understand people’s hard feelings.”

### ***Frederick Fung expects ADPL to win more district seats***

Mr Fung would not comment on how other candidates do in the next district council election. But he aspires to his own party. “I certainly wish we can obtain more than 16 seats in the coming election, since the ADPL is now facing the pro-Beijing camp.”

The ex-chairman of ADPL believed the party has been unfairly discredited in some of the districts they serve.

“I would say even if the pro-Beijing camp has financial support, it is not a threat,” he added.

The Sham Shui Po District councillor said it was necessary to vote for someone who could really help the community. “My district, my home. I would give whatever resources that are needed to my neighborhood.”



*Frederick Fung Kin-kee, Association for Democracy and Peoples Livelihood*

### ***“Pro-democratic party needs citizens’ support”***

In 2012, the pro-democratic party won three seats out of five in this youngest functional constituency. Upon the veto of the Chief Executive electoral reform last year, it is important to have local people’s support for the pro-democratic party in order to create power, said Mr To.

“The pro-Beijing camp has a powerful backing, and they would have secured seats at the Legislative Council once the District Council members are elected,” he stressed.

### ***Confident but refuses to predict***

Mr Fung is now focusing on the District Council poll and would not speculate on how he might do in the Legco election next year. He just wanted to do what he always did as a district councillor and a super-seat Legislative Council member.

“I have confidence, but not complacent,” said Mr Fung. “No matter who would be the opponents, I am always who I am.”

“It is wrong to consider district council election as the admission ticket to the five super seats,” said Mr Fung, “We should rather focus on improving people’s livelihood.”

## *James To: assured but no comment on “super seat”*



*James To Kun-sun, Democratic Party*

“I would not say anything about the coming election that has not happened yet; but as a present district councillor, I would say I have confidence,” said Mr To.

Among the five legislative super seats, Mr To, winning over 300,000 votes, had a landslide victory.

“It is encouraging, but it does not mean much when there are only five of us to compare with,” the Yau Tsim Mong councillor said.

The seats have been a fight between the two camps. “It depends on how many district councillors of the democratic camp would be elected, then eventually those more famous would have a better chance of getting nominated.”

“I am neither optimistic nor pessimistic towards the next election. Nomination for the Legco election within the Democratic Party has yet to happen,” said Mr To, “I do not wish to make any predictions.”

## *It’s all about time management*

Among the five super-seat councillors, Mr Ho had the lowest attendance in the District Council. Mr Ho explained that the District Council and Legco meetings often clashed.

Mr Ho advised young candidates, who might run for the super seat constituency, to pay attention to “have better time management, (as) you’ll need to handle both sides.”

He also highlighted the importance of having high popularity since the candidates had to deal with millions of voters.

“A super seat doesn’t offer you a ‘super’ or a ‘transcendent’ position. It only means you are held accountable to a larger number of voters.”

## *Time to let young candidates take over: Albert Ho considers stepping down*

Another political heavyweight, Albert Ho Chun-yan, has devoted 20 years to the Legislative Council and the Democratic Party. He would “very probably” not run for the super seats in next year’s Legislative Council election, but he would still contest next month’s district council election, seeking to continue in office in Tuen Mun.

Mr Ho was voted into one of the super seats after he lost the 2012 Chief Executive election. He believed his fame could earn him a place in this broadly represented constituency.

“It’s time for me to step down and allow some young people to take up this challenge,” said the former Democratic Party chairman.

Mr Ho said it was a good sign to have some new blood to rejuvenate the 21-year-old Democratic Party. The youngest candidate the Party fielded is only 21 years old.

“I’m so encouraged to see that the younger generation has gained political awareness after the Umbrella Movement,” said Mr Ho. According to him, participating in social events could be “life-changing” for youngsters.

The veteran politician admitted that running for an election these days was “much more difficult” than in the past, especially for the pan-democrats. “You need courage and conviction to join an opposition party.”

The pro-establishment camp was promising young politicians opportunities as they climbed up the political ladder and that had lured many to join. But Mr Ho said they might be put off by political pressure.



*Albert Ho Chun-yan, Democratic Party*

## ***“Sister Han”: the government offers no relief on high rent***

Wong Tai Sin District councillor Chan Yuen-han was one of the winners. The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Union representative had been known as the “queen of votes”, but she only ranked number four out of the five super seaters.

She has witnessed the evolution of Hong Kong’s electoral methods since the last days of British ruling. Ms Chan said the ultimate goal of the central government is to maintain checks and balances on different parties in the Legco.

“Super seats may be a product of political compromise, but they are somehow effective,” said Ms Chan, who is not running in this district council election. Coming from the labour sector, Ms Chan said she clearly understood the Hong Kong’s economic situation and how it has failed those on low income.

The rent of studio spaces in Kwun Tong’s factory buildings, for example, have jumped from \$2 per square foot to \$20, something those in the creative industry can barely afford.

“Behind it all are the real estate tycoons playing games among themselves, and the government simply has no policy to solve the problem,” said Ms Chan.

Ms Chan believed last year’s Umbrella Movement was a great opportunity for people, especially the youngsters, to think more about Hong Kong.

She was hopeful of the candidates who would fight for her seat. Her advice to them: protect labour rights, fight for gender equality, reform the mandatory provident fund hedging mechanism, and improve retirement protection.

“I hope that people will not pretend to be in the pro-establishment camp as they do in the pan-democrats just so that they can become heroes,” she said.

She hoped there would come a time when Hong Kong people could have a peaceful heart and could think critically to know their stance.



*Chan Yuen-han, Hong Kong Federation of Trade Union*

## ***The “queen of votes” will eventually leave politics***

“Super seats may be a product of political compromise, but they are somehow effective,” said Ms Chan, who is not running in this district council election.

She pointed out that issues are being discussed and debated over and over again in Legco everyday. She felt bored and pointless staying in the Council,

where “self-contradicting” and “tearing-harmony-apart” arguments were always raised. She wanted to devote herself to serving the district.

“Objectively speaking, political considerations and the fact that Legco refused to pass the political reform package are also reasons for me not to run in the poll,” she said.

“Eventually, people of my time will leave. I don’t know how long I would still be alive so I told myself not to be stubborn,” she said.

*By* **Phoebe Chau,  
Michelle Chan & Sharon Tang**  
*Edited by* **Nathaniel Suen,  
Joanne Lee & Joanna Wong**



E M A I L

*editors@tyr.hk*

F A C E B O O K

*The Young Reporter*

W E B S I T E

*tyr.hk*