

# An event for all

Organisations in Hong Kong are working tirelessly to ensure old TVs go to those in need so everyone can see the Olympics

Above: TVs for the needy, collected by St James' Settlement  
上：聖雅各福群會致力回收舊電視，並贈予有需要人士。

Olympic fever is steadily building in Hong Kong and armchair athletes and keen sports fans are putting the final touches to their preparations. For many of them, the countdown to an action-packed August will include heading out to buy a new television to be sure of enjoying to the full the record-breaking performances, knife-edge finishes and uplifting human dramas sure to occur during one of the world's great sporting spectacles.

The arrival of high-definition television (HDTV) will provide clearer pictures, better reception and brighter colours and, according to Cheung Chi-keung of leading electrical retailer Best Denki, the promise of watching higher quality images of this year's athletic heroes has spurred a rush for the latest wide-screen TVs and plasma products.

But while settling down to follow all the excitement of those gold medal moments, many Hong Kong viewers will know that they have also done their bit to uphold two of the most cherished Olympic ideals.

By donating their old TV sets, either directly to a non-governmental organisation (NGO) or via the government's waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) scheme, they will allow countless others to take part in the event, and show their support for the message that green actions, based on reuse and recycling, are the key to preserving the environment.

Josephine Lee Yuk-chi, senior manager for St James' Settlement, is delighted to see the results to date of the WEEE initiative, which her organisation runs in co-operation with the Environmental Protection Department (EPD). She says it has been given fresh impetus this year with the introduction of a regular collection service visiting easy-to-access locations around Hong Kong at preappointed times.

This allows people to drop off not just their used TV sets and computers but such things as refrigerators, washing machines, air-conditioners and microwave ovens. In this way, the scheme offers a practical solution to the recurring problem of how to dispose of no longer needed electrical products in the most effective way.

Ms Lee says that donated items are first taken to a depot and workshop in Kowloon Bay for inspection, testing and, if necessary, repair. Around 80 per cent are then distributed to needy families or individuals, whose requirements have been identified by social workers. The remainder usually go to social service centres or non-profit groups.



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As part of the agreement with the EPD, any item that is unusable is passed on to a government-approved recycling company which oversees dismantling and is licensed to properly dispose of any toxic items. Parts and components are either set aside for reuse or, in the case of metals and plastics, may go straight into the recycling process. When handling older cathode-ray tube TVs, special care is taken to ensure there is no risk of contamination from the heavy metals, flame retardant or organic pollutants inside.

Ms Lee says about 1,500 TVs were received last year and, with more than 450 collection centres across Hong Kong's 18 districts and with environmental awareness growing all the time, all the signs point to higher numbers this year. Community centres and schools are enthusiastically spreading the word, and property management companies and clubhouses are also throwing their weight behind the scheme by making semi-permanent collection points available for residents of leading developments.

St James' Settlement is not the only NGO doing such work in Hong Kong. Others, such as Crossroads International, have similarly well organised initiatives designed to meet the needs of less fortunate people locally and overseas.

Crossroads prefers people to state what they have to donate well in advance, by phone or via the organisation's website. This makes it easier to organise deliveries to the group's warehouse in Tuen Mun and to match the specific requirements of, say, a home for the elderly in Hong Kong or a school in Zambia or Ghana.

For TVs the key is that they should be in working order and come with the right remote control. Being able to supply the manual and various external cables is seen as helpful but not mandatory.

Crossroads International manager Julie Ostapovitch says, "We have quite a lot of demand for TVs. Some stay locally by going into the social welfare system, but we also have other overseas charity groups which apply for goods related to their work."

Depending on the needs of the consignee, 10 TVs may be part of a shipment which also includes school furniture, hospital beds or medical equipment.

Ms Ostapovitch says good co-operation between NGOs means that every viable donation finds a good home. "As long as someone in need receives the items that is the important thing, whether it is via Caritas, Oxfam, the Salvation Army, or any other charity," Ms Ostapovitch says.

### 高清電視 清晰透徹

在香港，倒數迎奧運的熱潮正一浪接一浪地熾熱起來，不管是整裝待發的參賽健兒或是熱衷運動的擁躉，都蓄勢以待迎接這個活力澎湃的奧運八月。當中不少人更會購置高清電視機，來欣賞高難度的動作、破紀錄的一刻和扣人心弦、高潮迭起的比賽。而環保和社福機構正竭盡全力確保舊電視能送到渴慕觀賞奧運的每個人手中。

高清電視(HDTV)能轉譯更清晰畫面，更亮麗的顏色和擁有更強的接收能力。最好電器指出這些體壇英雄令調屏幕和等離子電視的銷量增加不少。

捐出舊電視可選擇非牟利組織(NGO)或官方廢棄電子電機設備機構(WEEE)，他們會循環再用這些舊東西，實踐最鮮明有效的環保「綠色」行動。黑雅各福群會的資深經理李玉芝小姐，樂見與環境保護局(EDP)合作得到的好成績。特別在年初推行的標誌地點預的回收計劃，更帶來一股新的動力。它不單回收電視和電腦，連雪櫃、洗衣機、冷氣機、微波爐等家電亦同樣歡迎，確是處理棄用電器最有效益的好方法。回收的電器先送到九龍灣維修站檢測，大概八成送給經社工確認有需要的家庭或個人，餘下的則交予社服服務中心或非牟利機構。

他們與環保局(EDP)的合約條款列明，任何不能循環再用的物品必須送往政府認可的再生公司，在監管下處理任何含毒性的部份。可用的零件則貯存待用，至於金屬和塑膠則直接循環再用。至於顯像管更要特別處理重金屬，阻礙或內部有機物污染。李小姐指出去年回收的1,500部電視，隨著環保意識的普及，在全港18區約450個站的回收成績都提升了。社區中心、學校亦熱烈響應推廣環保訊息，而物業管理公司和會所也紛紛趨開大門，設立臨時回收點。

除了黑雅各福群會這個非牟利機構外，國際十字路會亦是類似的組織，他們有完善的架構，不單支援本地弱勢社群，甚至惠及海外。國際十字路會情商捐贈的電視，必須功能正常並連帶遙控器，若能附上說明書和各種連接電線，就更好不過。

捐贈人士需先致電或通過網頁聯繫，以便安排運送至屯門倉庫或配合特別要求，如送往九龍長者家裏，或桑比亞、迦納的學校。

國際十字路會的經理Julie Ostapovitch說：「我們需要大量的電視，部份轉送本地社區團體，海外慈善機構亦需求甚殷。」每次運送以10台電視為主，亦會按收貨單位的需求附上學校傢俬、醫療床或醫療儀器。Julie Ostapovitch強調他們與其他非牟利組織合作無間，每一宗的捐贈都找到好歸宿。「每宗申請個案都同樣重要，不管它是由明愛、樂施會、救世軍或其他慈善機構捐贈的。」

### Look how far we've come

Long-term Hong Kong residents can still remember the days back in the late 1950s and early 1960s when watching television was something of a community event. On a warm summer evening, a local shop owner or restaurateur would perch a bulky black-and-white set at some convenient spot for a swelling crowd from the local village or nearby housing estate to gather round and be enthralled.

Mouths agape, they would peer at grainy images of some costume drama, or strain to catch the commentary of a title-deciding football match as the sound unpredictably faded in and out.

Most evenings, a regular part of the entertainment would be the complete loss of picture for reasons unknown. And that, of course, would inevitably be followed by the gymnastic feats of a nimble youngster charged with moving the aerial to all sorts of experimental positions until reception was somehow restored. For years, the crowd would slowly disperse at the end of the evening sure in the knowledge that they had been privileged to see something that represented the very pinnacle of technology.

Well, times move on, and anyone who can recall such evenings in their youth will be doubly impressed by the arrival in Hong Kong of digital broadcasting and high-definition TVs. Together, they are ushering in a new era of wide-screen pictures, high-quality surround sound audio, interactive choices, multi-angle views and datacasting services.

All those problems associated with analogue broadcasts, such as ghosting, fuzzy images and strange electrical interruption at the approach of a typhoon will be consigned to the past. In fact, Hong Kong's two terrestrial broadcasters are already implementing the necessary technical changes and, by August this year, about 75 per cent of local households will be able to receive digital signals.

For some people, that will mean installing a set-top box to convert the incoming digital signals for viewing

on their current TV set. For others, though, it will be a sign that now is the perfect time to head to their favourite electrical store and consider the range of slim-line, mega-pixel, widescreen models now available.

With images of a resolution five times that of standard TVs, pictures will be clearer, and programming options embedded in the broadcast will allow for such things as subtitles, recipe details for a cooking show, alternative endings for a drama series, or background information about the characters, to pop up at the press of a button.

And, of course, one important choice still remains: whether to watch in the comfort of your own home or down at the local bar or restaurant with a crowd of like-minded friends and neighbours.

### 高清新世代 數碼全廣播

回顧五六十年代初，年長的香港居民，都不會忘記看電視是街坊間的「盛事」。炎炎夏日，店舖老闆把體積龐大的黑白電視機放在當眼處，附近居民便如蟻附膻般圍攏過來。那管是夾雜着干擾橫紋的古裝片，或經常有溫無聲的足球賽，觀眾都是全神貫注，看得津津有味。那時晚上播放電視節目經常無故中斷畫面，機靈的小伙子自會轉動天線來調整方位；當曲終人散，他們總會覺得能親眼見證高科技是一項殊榮。

數碼廣播及高清電視登陸香港帶來的興撼，誰會再記起年輕時的如煙往事。此刻大家正比試着新一代產品的功能，闊螢幕、環迴音響、互動模式、多角度視像和資料搜尋等。傳統模擬廣播的雪花、鬼影和易受地風影響的弊病已成過去。事實上香港兩家民營電視台，已裝妥新設備來配合新廣播技術，今年八月將有百分之七十五的本地家庭，可接收到數碼訊號。部分人選擇添置機頂盒收看高畫質節目，另一些直接到的影音店挑選超薄、超高像素、闊螢幕的各種型號電視。數碼高清電視的解像度是普通的五倍，映像更清晰，內置多樣功能，如字幕、烹飪食譜、選擇不同結局的本，背景資料等等。

然而更可選擇的是安坐家中，或是到酒吧與志同道合的好友一齊觀賞。