

Hong Kong is creating a mountain of waste with oversized infrastructure

• The result of overdesign is more concrete than we need, more reinforcing than we need, more grey than human beings should have to put up with, and more waste



Letters

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Aerial drone view of the Hung Hom MTR station on the Sha Tin-Central link. Photo: Winson Wong

The decision by Justice Hartmann's panel looking into the [problems](#) at Hung Hom station on the Sha Tin-Central MTR link came as no surprise to members of any of the professions involved in construction. This is nothing to do with collusion, sinister government pressure or any mysterious agenda. The simple reason is that the entire structure is massively overdesigned, as is virtually every other structure currently being developed in Hong Kong.

Overdesign is a plague in modern engineering. It is the result of many factors, including the demands placed by insurers; so-called quality systems such as ISO which require box-ticking skills at the expense of innovation; engineers manipulating designs to suit their own fiscal needs rather than the needs of the project; and others.

The result is [more concrete](#) than we need, more reinforcing than we need, more grey than human beings should have to put up with, and more waste.

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The inquiry commission decided that even though the structure was [incorrectly built](#), it is still within safe parameters. So, what is really being said is that if it had been built "correctly", a massive amount of material and labour would have been surplus to requirements, or waste. Multiply that by all the construction projects being undertaken and the quantity of waste is staggering.

It is time that engineers, the Buildings Department and all others involved in the construction industry took a long, hard look at their professional code of conduct and stopped this desecration of valuable resources. It's a crime against the planet and against society.

John Dainton, Aberdeen

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