



Launching of “Hedley Environmental Index”

Hedley Environmental Index reveals external costs of air pollution

Civic Exchange launched The *Hedley Environmental Index* (<http://sph.hku.hk/hedleyindex>), a new website which for the first time quantifies the public health and monetary costs of air pollution in Hong Kong, on Thursday, 18 December 2008.



The Index shows that air pollution has cost Hong Kong almost 2 billion dollars, over 1,100 deaths, 78,000 hospital bed-days and over 6.2 million doctor visits so far this year.

The Index, which relates four specific pollutants in Hong Kong’s atmosphere to the risks of death and illness and compiles the associated costs, is named in honour of Professor Hedley. It is based on peer-reviewed research conducted by his team.

Hong Kong currently lacks the legislation, the air quality standards and the administrative procedures to address the problem. So by showing how far our pollution exceeds the World Health Organization’s Air Quality Guidelines, and how much this is costing us in dollars and affecting lives, the Hedley Environmental Index lays down a marker, minute by minute, that tells us all exactly how much we have to do.

Setting the context for the development and release of the Index, the current review of the Hong Kong Air Quality Objectives for the first time in over 20 years proved an opportunity to put into place some of the infrastructure to bring Hong Kong’s air pollution on a par with other world cities such as Los Angeles and London, that have succeeded in reducing air pollution without harming economic development.

[Friends of the Earth](#) has linked the [Hedley Environmental Index](#) to their website because they believe it is essential for people to be properly informed of the risks our air pollution imposes on our daily lives.