

Big backing for expatriate youth club

By ZELDA CAWTHORNE

A MOVE to set up a club for Hongkong's expatriate teenagers has received massive support, with the Government among the first to respond.

At a jam-packed public meeting in Central last night, one of the convenors, Dr Frank White, announced that Government Property Administrator, Mr Ian Wotherspoon, had called on him to say he was willing to discuss possibilities for a venue.

"As yet there are no guarantees, but Mr Wotherspoon assured me the Government would give it their best shot," said Dr White, reader in anatomy at the University of Hongkong and the father of two teenagers.

Dr White said that following the

publication of Monday's article in the *South China Morning Post* exposing the plight of Hongkong's expatriate "street kids" – mostly young teenagers who have been reduced to virtual vagrants on Friday and Saturday nights in the absence of a suitable venue – the response from the public had been extraordinary.

"Andrew alone got over 100 phone calls," said Dr White, referring to Andrew Lawton, a 21-year-old local musician who is the other key force behind the initiative.

About 200 adults and youngsters crammed into the Jazz Club in D'Aguiar Street last night to lend their support to the proposed club, which has been dubbed the Warehouse.

Although its main attraction would

be a disco, the "clean as a whistle" alcohol-free club would offer numerous activities ranging from experimental theatre and movies, to just "hanging out" in a safe, wholesome atmosphere, Dr White said.

The Commander, Central District of the Royal Hongkong Police, Gus Cunningham, has offered to help keep it that way by providing the Warehouse with a low-key police presence.

Dr White said that with about 7,000 expatriate teenagers in Hongkong, premises of about 10,000 square feet would be needed for the club which would be self-financing and managed by responsible young adults.

"It is vital that the needs of our teenagers are met," he said. "I don't want to see any more drug casualties."