

S. L. M. L.

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AA boasts top track record

The Hongkong Automobile Association patted itself on the back, reshuffled its hierarchy, and promised further expansion of its activities at its annual general meeting last night.

Retiring president, Phil Taylor, said the cause for satisfaction was "a very good year in all our areas of activity."

He reported that membership had increased, new services and facilities had been introduced, and the bank account was in a healthy state.

But he warned that two major items of expenditure would eat into that surplus in the coming year.

Plans for an AA centre in Kowloon, complete with breakdown and vehicle inspection services and an indoor driving school, are already well advanced, Mr Taylor said.

The centre is scheduled to open in October.

Development plans of the other long-standing project, the off-street driving school for which the Government

has offered a site at Shatin, still await Government approval.

"The main reason we want to go ahead with it is that we think it will improve the standard of driving tuition," Mr Taylor said.

"Ultimately this should be reflected in lower accident figures."

An off-street school would give people the confidence to become better drivers, he said, and would also reduce the numbers of learners on public roads.

The AA also hopes that it would help to cut down the long backlog of people waiting to take their driving tests.

If its Shatin plans are approved, the association intends to run a shuttle bus service from its Kowloon centre to the driving area.

Mr Taylor, until recently the Government's traffic expert, also reiterated one of the association's main themes — a plea for the Tuen Mun Highway to be finished as soon as possible.

"The Automobile Association has been applying pressure to the Government about this for some time.

"It appears that the message is getting through," he said.

There are two problems, Mr Taylor added: the road itself, and the standard of driving on it.

"And that brings us back to the question of improving driving tuition in Hongkong."

Mr Taylor retired as the association's president last night, only to become its first executive director.

However, he denied that the full-time position, covering press relations, advising the committee and planning future projects, had been specially created for him.

The association decided that it needed a full-time administrator, he said, and the post had been properly advertised.

Mr Robin Hauser, the former vice-president, an architect and 20-year Hongkong resident, succeeds him as president.