

Anger at arts grants

By OWEN HUGHES

ARTS groups are angry that a newly-revamped Council for the Performing Arts (CPA) grants scheme that matches government and private sector money to put on events is "fundamentally flawed".

Although individual grants have doubled in size to \$100,000, they claim the money can only be used to publicise a sponsor and not to improve the quality of a production.

They are unhappy that groups can only apply for a grant if they do not have a deficit for their production budget.

Mr Jeffrey Ho Wai-lung, artistic and administrative director of a Wan Chai-based theatre said while the

CPA meant well, the new grant framework betrayed a lack of understanding about how arts groups operate.

"They think this will work to attract more sponsors to give more money to the arts. But the CPA is giving money not for an event's artistic merit but for publicity for businessmen - there is no benefit to the production."

The matching grant scheme replaces a trial one introduced last year. CPA vice-chairman and Wharf chairman Mr Peter Wob Kwong-ching said the revised scheme, based on suggestions from the "arts and business communities", placed "greater emphasis on the benefits to the business sponsors".