

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**FHB(FE)227****(Question Serial No. 3716)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume I Page 250 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 217):

Regarding the supply of niches under the Department, please advise this Committee on the following:

- a) the number of unallocated niches in each of the cemeteries under the Department, with a breakdown by cemetery and type of niches, in the coming three years; and
- b) whether the Department will consider allocating resources to review the allocation and use of the niches in 2014-15, including adjusting the number of cinerary urns allowed to be stored in a niche, and whether priority will be given to relocating cinerary urns storing ashes of deceased persons from the same family placed in niches in different cemeteries to a family niche in order to vacate niches for re-allocation; if yes, the work plan and the estimated expenditure to be involved.

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth

Reply:

- (a) The number of new niches to be allocated by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) in the coming three years is given below:

	Name of Columbaria				
	Diamond Hill	Wo Hop Shek	Cheung Chau	Peng Chau	Lamma Island
Standard niche	525	30 046	1 000	149	388
Large niche	0	135	0	0	28

The number of used niche available for re-allocation will depend on the number of niches returned to the Department.

- (b) There are two types of niches in public columbaria managed by the Department, namely the standard and the large niche, which can accommodate two and four sets of cremated ashes respectively. To enhance utilisation, the Department has removed such restriction since January 2014. An applicant may now deposit as many additional sets of cremated ashes that a standard or a large niche can hold, subject to application and approval of the Department. The expenditure involved will be absorbed within our existing resources.