

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)168

(Question Serial No. 2653)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

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

Question:

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department relaxed the restriction on the number of sets of cremated ashes placed in a niche last year to allow for placement of more than one set of cremated ashes. Please advise on the number of relevant applications received, the number of successful applications and the number of additional sets of ashes that have been placed as a result. Please also advise on the publicity work of the Department on the relaxation and the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon WU Chi-wai (Member Question No. 48)

Reply:

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) has since January 2014 removed the cap on the number of sets of cremated ashes that may be placed in a public niche. In 2014, the Department received 27 applications for placing additional sets of ashes, all of which were approved.

On publicity, the Department has announced the relaxation on its website, as well as through press releases on the allocation of new public niches in 2014. The relaxation arrangement was also publicised in the advisory checklist for consumers on purchasing private columbarium niches. That checklist was issued by the Food and Health Bureau (the Bureau) in June 2014, and uploaded onto the websites of the Bureau and the Department, with copies distributed at the Department's booth in the Retiree and Senior Fair in July 2014. A new radio Announcement in the Public Interest promoting the placing of additional cremated ashes into public niches has been broadcast since December 2014. A new publicity leaflet on the relaxation arrangement will be produced for distribution to non-government organisations concerned, with copies being made available at the coming Retiree and Senior Fair in July 2015 and the Cemeteries and Crematoria offices of the Department. The total expenditure involved will be about \$40,000.