

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)319**

**(Question Serial No. 4266 )**

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:

With regard to public niches, please provide information on the following:

- (a) the number of deaths (Hong Kong residents) and the means of disposal of the dead (by burial or cremation) in the past 3 years; and
- (b) the number of applications for public niches in Hong Kong, the number of niches allocated, the total number of applicants on the waiting list for public niches and the average waiting time for a public niche in the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (Member Question No. 39)

Reply:

- (a) The information sought is provided as follows -

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Deaths</b>	<b>No. of Burials</b>	<b>No. of Cremations</b>
2014	45 710	3 477	41 244
2015	46 757	3 355	42 737
2016	46 662	3 253	43 556

- (b) New niches are allocated by computer balloting. Waiting list applies only to the allocation of niches returned to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department).

The information sought on allocation of new niches is as follows -

<b>Year</b>	<b>New niches</b>	
	<b>No. of applications</b>	<b>No. of niches allocated</b>
2014	16 321	12 053
2015	11 627	14 573
2016	178	5 239

Note: The year in which new niches are allocated may not be the same as that in which the applications are made.

In the past 3 years, on average about 270 niches per annum are returned to the Department. These niches are re-allocated according to the priority in the waiting list of the respective columbarium. The information sought is provided as follows -

<b>Year</b>	<b>Re-allocated niches</b>			
	<b>No. of applications</b>	<b>No. of niches re-allocated</b>	<b>No. of applications on the waiting list</b>	<b>Average waiting time (months)</b>
2014	5 554	193	23 235	54
2015	7 164	394	21 048	45
2016	6 923	271	24 280	42

Note: The average waiting time is dependent on the number of niches that are returned to the Department for re-allocation.

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