

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**FHB(FE)219****(Question Serial No. 1009)**Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not specifiedProgramme: (4) Public Education and Community InvolvementControlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and HealthQuestion:

Regarding the stepping up of promotion of green burial,

1. please advise on the details of the "central registration scheme", the estimated expenditure involved and the number of registrations made since the setting up of the Central Register;
2. please set out as per the table below the number of cases handled by the Department and the expenditure involved in the past 5 years (i.e. from 2014 to 2018); and

Year		Number of Deaths	Burial	Cremation	Interment of cremated ashes in public niches	Scattering of cremated ashes in the designated areas in Hong Kong waters	Scattering of cremated ashes in Gardens of Remembrance
2014	Number of cases						
	Expenditure involved						
2015	Number of cases						
	Expenditure involved						

2016	Number of cases						
	Expenditure involved						
2017	Number of cases						
	Expenditure involved						
2018	Number of cases						
	Expenditure involved						

3. please advise on the number of users and the utilisation rate of the ferry service provided by the Department for scattering cremated ashes at sea, as well as the expenditure involved in each of the past 5 years (i.e. from 2014 to 2018).

Asked by: Hon WONG Kwok-kin (LegCo internal reference no.: 47)

Reply:

1. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) has been promoting green burial through different channels, including Announcement in the Public Interest on television and radio, promotion videos, posters and banners, a mobile application, a dedicated website, collaboration with non-government organisations and promotional activities at senior exhibitions, etc. We launched a Green Burial Central Register (GBCR) in January 2019 to encourage the public to register their wish for green burial. The registration, free of charge, can be made online, by post, fax or email.

The expenditure involved in setting up the GBCR was about \$0.9 million with an estimated system maintenance cost at about \$50,000 per annum. Up to end March 2019, over 1000 individuals have registered in the GBCR.

2. The number of cases handled by the Department in the past 5 calendar years is given as follows -

Year	No. of deaths	No. of coffin burials	No. of cremations	No. of ashes interment in public niches	No. of cases of scattering of ashes	
					At sea	In Gardens of Remembrance
2014	45 710	1 056	41 244	15 504	856	2 697
2015	46 757	1 009	42 737	18 613	877	3 196
2016	46 662	916	43 556	8 630	900	4 004
2017	45 883	919	42 809	2 935	966	4 966
2018	47 479	919	43 803	3 657	972	5 352

The expenditure incurred by the Department in providing cemeteries and crematoria services in 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 was \$341.4 million, \$327.4 million, \$332.5 million, \$345.6 million and \$356.9 million (revised estimate) respectively. There is no breakdown by type of services.

3. The number of users and the utilisation rate of the free ferry service provided by the Department for scattering cremated ashes at sea in the past 5 calendar years is given as follows -

Year	Number of applications handled	Service capacity	Utilisation rate
2014	790	900	88%
2015	817	950	86%
2016	850	1 175	72%
2017	906	1 175	77%
2018	878	1 225	72%

The expenditure incurred by the Department for contracting out the free ferry service in 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 was \$2.0 million, \$2.1 million, \$2.3 million, \$2.3 million and \$2.4 million (revised estimate) respectively.

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