

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)224

(Question Serial No. 1935)

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:

1. What is the estimated expenditure of the Private Columbaria Licensing Board in 2019-20? Please also advise on the staff establishment for the provision of administrative support.
2. What is the estimated number of licence applications to be processed by the Private Columbaria Licensing Board in 2019-20?
3. Are there any private columbaria which have been granted a licence? If yes, please give the name(s) of the private columbarium/columbaria concerned.

Asked by: Hon WONG Pik-wan, Helena (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

1. The expenditure of the Private Columbaria Licensing Board (the Licensing Board) and the manpower for providing the executive support are included in the estimated expenditure of the Private Columbaria Affairs Office (PCAO) under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. In 2019-20, the PCAO will have about 60 staff members and the estimated expenditure is \$76.2 million.
2. As at 18 March 2019, the Licensing Board was processing 333 applications for specified instruments submitted by 136 private columbaria, 106 of which submitted applications for a licence. The Licensing Board will continue to process these applications in 2019- 20 as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, the progress depends to a large extent on whether the applicants had complied with the requirements stipulated in the Private Columbaria Ordinance (Cap. 630) and those specified by the Licensing Board at the time when they submitted the applications, and whether all the required documents and information have been furnished. At present, most columbaria have yet been able to submit all the required supporting documents and information. The PCAO and/or relevant departments have to ask quite a number of them to provide clarifications or supplementary information. The PCAO will continue to maintain close liaison with the relevant departments and the applicants in

order to complete the vetting work and submit the applications to the Licensing Board for decision as soon as possible.

3. Applications for a licence submitted in respect of private columbaria “Filial Park” and “Pu Tong Ta, Chi Lin Nunnery” were approved in January and March 2019 respectively. The Licensing Board also agreed in principle in February 2019 that the licence application submitted by private columbarium “Shan Yuan” basically met the application requirements for a licence (except for the land-related ones), and will make its final decision after the applicant has complied with the land-related requirements.

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