

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)335

(Question Serial No. 5115)

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 the columbaria services of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, please advise this Committee of:

- (a) the number of new niches available for interment of ashes of the deceased in the columbaria under the Department in the past 3 years and in 2019-20, with a breakdown by columbarium;
- (b) the number of cases currently on the waiting list for niches managed by the Department;
- (c) the average waiting time for interment of ashes in niches managed by the Department after cremation of the deceased in each of the past 3 years; and
- (d) the number of niches vacated for re-allocation each year after the relaxation of the cap on the number of sets of ashes that may be stored in a niche.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 202)

Reply:

- (a) The number of new niches in public columbaria available for allocation from 2016 to 2020 is provided as follows -

Location	Number of niches	Year of completion
Peng Chau Columbarium Extension	360	2018 (completed)
Hong Kong Cemeteries and Crematoria Office (part) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) at Wong Nai Chung Road, Wan Chai*	855	2019
Tsang Tsui, Tuen Mun*	163 320	2019
Wo Hop Shek Cemetery (Phase 1), Fanling	44 000	2019
Cheung Chau Columbarium Extension	1 250	2020
Lai Chi Yuen Cemetery Extension	790	2020

* The Department plans to allocate about 20 000 niches in Tsang Tsui Columbarium (first phase) in Tuen Mun together with 855 niches in Wong Nai Chung Road Columbarium in Wan Chai in the coming niche allocation exercise tentatively scheduled for mid 2019.

- (b) New niches are allocated through computer balloting. Waiting list applies only to the allocation of niches returned to the Department. In end 2018, there were 35 693 applications on the waiting list.
- (c) The Department does not keep statistics on the average waiting time from cremation to the deposition of cremated ashes into public niches.
- (d) 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. The information sought is provided as follows -

Year	No. of niches returned
2014	8
2015	12
2016	4
2017	1
2018	3

- End -