

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)103

(Question Serial No. 0556)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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

Programme: (4) Public Education and Community Involvement

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Regarding “promoting green burial as a more sustainable form of disposal of cremated human ashes”,

1. please state the number of registrations made each year since the setting up of the central registration scheme;
2. please set out as per the table below the number of cases handled by the Department and the expenditure involved in the past 3 years (i.e. from 2017 to 2019); 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
2017	Number of cases						
	Expenditure involved						
2018	Number of cases						
	Expenditure involved						
2019	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 3 years (i.e. from 2017 to 2019).

Asked by: Hon HO Kai-ming (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)

Reply:

1. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department launched a Green Burial Central Register (GBCR) in January 2019. Up to February 2020, over 3 500 individuals have registered in the GBCR.
2. The number of cases handled by the Department in the past 3 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
2017	45 883	919	42 809	2 935	966	4 966
2018	47 479	919	43 803	3 657	972	5 352
2019	48 706	819	45 543	4 196	899	6 280

The expenditure incurred by the Department in providing cemeteries and crematoria services in 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 was \$345.6 million, \$355.4 million and \$407.6 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 3 calendar years is given as follows :

Year	Number of applications handled	Service capacity	Utilisation rate
2017	906	1 175	77%
2018	878	1 225	72%
2019	810	1 250	65%

The expenditure incurred by the Department for contracting out the free ferry service in 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 was \$2.3 million, \$2.4 million and \$2.4 million (revised estimate) respectively.

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