

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)155

(Question Serial No. 2540)

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:

Please advise on the following:

1. the revised and estimated expenditures of the Private Columbaria Licensing Board in 2019-20 and 2020-21, and the respective staff establishment for the provision of administrative support;
2. the number of licence applications processed by the Private Columbaria Licensing Board in 2019-20, the number of licence applications approved, the estimated number of licence applications in 2020-21, and the estimated time normally required for approving an application; and
3. the names of the private columbaria which have been granted a licence at present.

Asked by: Hon WONG Pik-wan, Helena (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

1. The expenditure of the Private Columbaria Licensing Board (PCLB) and the manpower for providing the executive support are included in the estimated expenditure of the Private Columbaria Affairs Office (PCAO) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. In 2019-20, the PCAO had about 60 staff and the revised estimate was \$74.92 million. In 2020-21, the PCAO will increase its manpower to about 70 staff and the estimated expenditure is \$83.6 million.
2. In 2019-20, the PCLB granted 3 licences and approved in principle 2 licence applications and 1 application for a temporary suspension of liability (TSOL). It also refused 15 sets of applications for specified instruments (including 12 licence applications). On 6 March 2020, the PCLB was processing applications for specified instruments submitted by 116 private columbaria (91 of which had submitted licence applications). The PCLB will continue to process these applications in 2020-21. The time the PCLB takes to process a licence application depends on the actual circumstances of the case, particularly on whether the private columbarium has

complied with all the requirements for licence application stipulated in the Private Columbaria Ordinance (Cap. 630) and those specified by the PCLB (including the requirements relating to planning, land, buildings, fire safety, electrical and mechanical safety, management plan, right to use the premises, environmental protection, etc.), and whether the applicant has submitted sufficient documents to prove that the private columbarium has complied with the requirements. Upon receiving the documents or information required for an application, the PCAO will invite the relevant departments to provide comments. The applicant will then be asked to take the necessary follow-up actions and submit reports, which will be forwarded to the relevant departments for their vetting. After confirming that a licence application has complied with the application requirements, the PCAO will arrange for the submission of the application to the PCLB for determination.

3. As at 6 March 2020, the PCLB has granted 5 licences and the private columbaria concerned are Filial Park; Pu Tong Ta, Chi Lin Nunnery; Shan Yuan; Shatin Po Fook Hill (excluding Miu King Tong); and Tung Wah Coffin Home. The PCLB has also approved in principle 2 licence applications submitted by Po Tung Tower, Lo Hon Monastery and by Fung Ying Seen Koon; and 1 application for a TSOL submitted by Shang Sin Chun Tong.

- End -