

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)258

(Question Serial No. 4449)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services
(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:

With regard to the burial services provided by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, please advise this Committee of the following:

- (a) the number of cases of using the Department's service of scattering of cremains in Gardens of Remembrance in each of the past 3 years;
- (b) the number of cases of using the Department's service of scattering of cremains at sea, as well as the utilisation rate of the service quota, in each of the past 3 years;
- (c) whether the Department will continue to increase the service quota for scattering of cremains at sea in 2020-21; if yes, the details and the estimated expenditure in this respect; if no, the reason(s);
- (d) whether the Department has drawn up any plan for continuing the publicity work on scattering of cremains in Gardens of Remembrance and at sea in 2020-21; if yes, details of the plan, including a breakdown of the estimated expenditure by publicity channel or event, as well as the timetable and estimated indicators for the events concerned; if no, the reason(s); and
- (e) the number of webpages dedicated to the memory of the deceased in the "memorial.gov.hk" website managed by the Department, the number of new memorial webpages created in each of the past 3 years, and the number of visitors of the website in each of the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 354)

Reply:

- (a) The number of cases of scattering ashes in the Gardens of Remembrance managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in the past 3 calendar years is as follows:

Year	Number of cases of scattering cremated ashes in Gardens of Remembrance
2017	4 966
2018	5 352
2019	6 280

- (b) The number of applications received and the utilisation rates of the free ferry service provided by the Department for scattering cremated ashes at sea in the past 3 calendar years are as follows:

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

- (c) The Department reviews the service capacity for the free ferry service from time to time, and will consider enhancing the service to meet the needs of the public.
- (d) In 2020-21, the Department will continue to promote green burial through different channels, including broadcasting Announcements in the Public Interest on television, radio and online platforms, producing promotional videos, displaying posters and banners, launching a mobile application and a dedicated website, collaborating with non-governmental organisations and running promotional activities at senior exhibitions, etc. To further enhance public awareness of the service of scattering ashes at sea, the Department has invited the public to visit the service of scattering ashes at sea at no charge since April 2019. During these visits, which are organised on a monthly basis, dedicated staff will introduce the service to the visitors. The estimated amount of provision earmarked for promoting green burial in 2020-21 is about \$17.2 million.

While the total number of green burial cases handled by the Department has increased by about 21% from 2017 to 2019, it takes time for the community at large to accept green burial as a sustainable form of handling cremated human ashes. We will continue to improve the green burial facilities and services and step up our publicity and public education efforts.

- (e) As at 31 December 2019, there were 14 140 memorial webpages for the deceased created at the Internet Memorial Service website of the Department. Information on the number of newly created memorial webpages and the hit count of such webpages in the past 3 calendar years is provided as follows:

Year	Number of newly created memorial webpages	Hit count
2017	1 493	675 947
2018	1 691	641 891
2019	1 612	445 456

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