

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)139

(Question Serial No. 2538)

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 Diane WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Please set out the annual staff establishment, expenditure on salaries and total expenditure of the Private Columbaria Affairs Office (PCAO) since its establishment. Please also provide the number of inspections conducted/enforcement actions taken, the number of suspected illegal private columbaria detected, as well as the respective numbers of arrests, prosecutions and convictions in relation to such operations, in each year since the establishment of the PCAO.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla (LegCo internal reference no.: 49)

Reply:

Since the establishment of the Private Columbaria Affairs Office (PCAO) in 2017, the staff establishment, expenditure on salaries and total expenditure as at 31 March each year are tabulated as follows:

	2017-18 (actual)	2018-19 (actual)	2019-20 (actual)	2020-21 (revised estimate)	2021-22 (estimate)
Staff establishment	54	60	64	67	67
Expenditure on salaries (\$ million)	33.4	41.1	47.0	49.7	49.2
Total expenditure (\$ million)	43.1	63.5	69.1	72.8	83.6

The PCAO comprises the Private Columbaria Licensing Board Secretariat, the Licensing Team, the Enforcement Team, the Branch Administration Unit and the Financial Monitoring Team. Taking enforcement actions pursuant to the Private Columbaria Ordinance is one of its duties.

The number of inspections conducted/enforcement actions taken by the PCAO and the number of private columbaria suspected to be illegally operated, as well as the respective numbers of arrests, prosecutions and convictions, are tabulated as follows:

	2017 (Starting from 30/6/2017)	2018	2019	2020
Number of inspections conducted/enforcement actions taken	About 450	About 530	About 450	About 250
Number of private columbaria suspected to be illegally operated	26	56	18	30
Number of arrests	0	7	10	10
Number of prosecutions	0	0	3	3
Number of convictions	0	0	3	3

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