

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)167

(Question Serial No. 0186)

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 Diane WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Regarding “continue to promote green burial, particularly in respect of promotion of a central registration scheme”, please advise on:

1. the number of registrations made since the setting up of the Green Burial Central Register. Is the expected target met?
2. the future publicity and promotion plans. What are the resources involved?
3. the number of cases for which green burial (scattering of ashes at sea and in Gardens of Remembrance) was opted in each of the past 3 years. Is the target met in terms of effectiveness? Is there room for improvement?
4. the expenditure incurred by the Government in providing free services of scattering ashes each year. Will the Government consider charging a fee in the future?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony (LegCo internal reference no.: 135)

Reply:

1. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department set up a Green Burial Central Register (GBCR) in January 2019, allowing the public to make prior registration for green burial and inform their family members of their wish. Up to February 2021, over 5 800 people have registered in the GBCR.
2. In 2021-22, 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, collaborating with non-governmental organisations and running promotional activities at exhibitions for seniors. To enhance public awareness of the green burial service, the Department organises regular guided tours for the public and organisations to visit its Gardens of Remembrance for a better understanding of the relevant services

and facilities. The estimated amount of provision earmarked for promoting green burial in 2021-22 is about \$17 million.

3. The information sought is provided as follows:

Year	Scattering of ashes			Percentage of total number of deaths
	In Gardens of Remembrance*	At sea	Total	
2018	6 074	972	7 046	14.8%
2019	7 010	899	7 909	16.2%
2020	6 822	854	7 676	15.2%

*Inclusive of cases handled by private cemeteries.

The total number of green burial cases last year has increased by about 9% as compared to that in 2018 (a slight drop as compared to that in 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 step up publicity, strengthen public education efforts and improve the green burial facilities and services to promote greater public acceptance of green burial.

4. The expenditure incurred by the Department in providing cemeteries and crematoria services, including the service for scattering of ashes at sea and in Gardens of Remembrance, in 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 was \$355.4 million, \$419.7 million and \$438.0 million (revised estimate) respectively. There is no separate breakdown of the expenditure by type of service. At present, the Department does not have any plans to impose charges on the service for scattering of ashes.

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