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17 April 2008

Ir Dr Honorable Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
 Chairman, Public Works Sub-committee
 Legislative Council
 Legislative Council Building
 8 Jackson Road
 Central
 Hong Kong

Dear Mr Ho,

Public Works Sub-committee
4340DS "Port Shelter sewerage stage 3 Mang Kung Uk Sewerage"

At the meeting of the Public Works Sub-committee on 20.2.2008, a Member requested further information on the cost item attributed to *tun fu* (筵符). I write in relation to the Member's request for information.

Tun fu is a traditional ceremony for indigenous villages before construction works take place. Villagers believe that such ceremonies should be held to avoid disturbing local *fung shui* (風水). Out of respect for the tradition, the Administration permits a discretionary once-and-for-all *ex-gratia* allowance to cater for the need of indigenous villagers to hold a *tun fu* ceremony where public works would take place in a village, or its proximity. Normally, *tun fu* covers expenses for a geomancer's fee, joss-papers and sticks used, and food offered in the ceremony.

The allowance is made on a "one claim per project per village" basis and may vary from district to district and from project to project. The extent and cost of a *tun fu* usually depend on the importance of a deity spot involved or vary with the extent to which *fung shui* is affected. Villages may submit a claim to the District Lands Offices to claim the allowance. In granting the allowance, the District Lands Offices would refer to past records to determine the appropriate amount of *tun fu* in a particular case.

As *tun fu* is discretionary in nature, each claim is considered and negotiated on its own merits. Currently, District Lands Officers are authorised to approve

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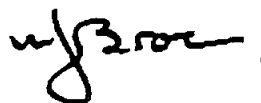
payments up to \$20,000. For payments between \$20,001 and \$30,000, the Deputy Director of Lands is authorised to give approval. For payments over \$30,000, approval from the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury is required.

For the Mang Kung Uk Sewerage project, the work involves laying of sewers in eight indigenous villages in Mang Kung Uk. It is currently expected that five of these villages would arrange for *tun fu* ceremonies. We estimate the allowance for each case is about \$10,000 and therefore, the total estimate for the project in relation to *tun fu* amounts to \$50,000.

For 6746TH – Reconstruction and Improvement of Tuen Mun Road, the works involve only the clearance of Government land near So Kwun Wat Tsuen and Kar Wo Lei Resite Village where there are indigenous inhabitants. Director of Highways considered that the project would unlikely cause direct disturbance to the villages considering that the project involves only widening along the existing route of Tuen Mun Road and that the two villages are 1 kilometre and 80 metres away from the road respectively. As such, only \$2,000 has been included in the estimate. However, the actual payment may vary depending on the number of claims submitted. Lands Department will consider each claim on its own merits.

You may wish to note that the *tun fu* fee for each village is only a rough figure for estimate purposes. Any claim submitted will need to be justified on its individual merits. After the village representative has submitted his itemised costs for *tun fu*, the Lands Department would negotiate with the village representative and seek approval from the appropriate authority once a final amount is determined. Village representatives are also required to provide an account of expenditure subsequent to the performance of the ceremonies, which staff of the relevant District Lands Office would usually attend and take photographs of for record purposes.

Yours sincerely,



(Dr M J Broom)

for Director of Environmental Protection

cc Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
 Secretary for Development
 Secretary for Transport and Housing
 Director of Drainage Services
 Director of Highways
 Director of Lands

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