

For information

**LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Follow-up Actions Arising from Meeting on 8 July 2014**

At its meeting on 8 July 2014, the Panel requested the Administration to provide information on the current number of applicants on the waiting list for allocation of new public niches and the estimated number of applicants waiting for new public niches in 2031. The information required is provided below.

2. For the allocation of new public niches, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) determines the priorities for the selection of such niches through computer balloting.

3. With regard to the new public columbarium at Kiu Tau Road of Wo Hop Shek Cemetery (which provides about 43 700 new niches) and the Diamond Hill Columbarium extension (which adds some 1 500 new niches), FEHD has commenced a three-phase niche allocation exercise since September 2012. Phase I and Phase II of the allocation exercise were completed in May 2013 and May 2014 respectively, resulting in the allocation of 20 697 new niches. The remaining 24 474 new niches will be allocated in Phase III (i.e. the last phase). FEHD received a total of 31 342 eligible applications for Phase III. Computer balloting was conducted on 11 September 2014. Qualified applicants will be invited from 6 October 2014 onwards to select niches according to their priority number, until all available niches are allocated. Phase III is expected to be completed by late 2015.

4. As regards used public niches, FEHD has all along adopted a waiting list system and allocates used public niches in respective public columbaria on a first-come-first-served basis. Some 300 used public niches are available each year. The average waiting time in the past three years was about 46 months. Currently, there are some 21 700 applications on the waiting list.

5. As regards the 24 sites in 18 districts identified by the Government for columbarium development, whether they can eventually be used for developing columbarium facilities will depend on the results of the technical feasibility studies or traffic impact assessments or engineering feasibility studies (where applicable). Upon completion of the relevant studies, we will consult the relevant District Councils (“DCs”) before going firm on developing the sites for columbarium use. Subject to the support of DCs and the Legislative Council for the projects currently under planning, the supply of new niches will cumulatively increase to hundreds of thousands between now and 2031.

6. FEHD will continue with its endeavours to provide more public columbarium facilities to meet overall demand.

7. Members are invited to note the above information.

Food and Health Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
October 2014