

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**EEB(F)115**

**(Question Serial No. 0980)**

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 (Donald NG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

In 2026-27, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will continue to implement measures to increase the supply of public columbarium and crematorium facilities and to promote the scattering of cremated human ashes at sea or in Gardens of Remembrance (GoRs). In this connection, please advise this Committee:

- 1) of the respective numbers of public and private columbaria in the past 3 years (2023, 2024 and 2025), and the number of niches therein available for application;
- 2) of the number of deceased persons allocated with public niches and their places of interment, as well as the average waiting time for niches at different public columbaria, in the past 3 years (2023, 2024 and 2025);
- 3) of the numbers of people opted for the scattering of cremated human ashes at sea or in GoRs in the past 3 years (2023, 2024 and 2025), and the measures in place to encourage more members of the public to adopt such practices;
- 4) whether the Government has conducted studies on the supply and demand of niches for the next 10 years; if yes, the details; if no, the reasons; and
- 5) of the manpower and expenditure involved in managing columbaria in 2025-26.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Chun, Jonathan (LegCo internal reference no.: 32)

Reply:

- 1) The number of public columbaria and the number of niches therein available for application in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Number of public columbaria	12	12	13
New niches available for allocation	About 128 000	About 111 500	About 133 000

With regard to private niches, as at 28 February 2026, the Private Columbaria Licensing Board (PCLB) had approved licence/exemption applications from 24 private columbaria in total. Of the about 320 000 niches provided by these 24 private columbaria, around

280 000 niches have been sold/let out, leaving approximately 40 000 niches available for sale/letting out. In addition, PCLB is currently processing the licence/exemption applications from 72 private columbaria, of which 71 have received approval-in-principle (i.e. these applications are found to be in compliance with the relevant basic requirements for building, fire, and electrical and mechanical safety). If the applications from the aforementioned 72 private columbaria are approved, they will provide around 420 000 niches, of which about 230 000 have already been sold/let out, with the remaining around 190 000 niches available for sale/letting out.

- 2) The current supply of public niches is adequate. Since mid-2020, all eligible applicants have been successfully allocated with niches without the need to wait. The actual numbers of new public niches allocated in the past 3 years and their locations are as follows:

Columbarium	2023	2024	2025
Tsang Tsui	12 273	9 661	8 400
Wo Hop Shek	3 171	3 482	3 013
Cape Collinson-San Ha	4 844	5 026	3 983
Shek Mun*	-	-	3 339

\* Shek Mun Columbarium was commissioned in September 2025.

- 3) The numbers of people opting for the scattering of cremated human ashes at sea or in Gardens of Remembrance (GoRs) in the past 3 years are as follows:

Year \ Number of cases	Scattering of ashes			Percentage out of the number of deaths (%)
	In GoRs*	At sea	Total	
2023	8 237	1 144	9 381	16.5%
2024	8 522	1 032	9 554	18.2%
2025	8 951	937	9 888	19.1%

\* Including cases handled by private cemeteries.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department makes use of a wide range of contents and channels to enhance publicity with different partners to promote green burial to a wider audience, endeavouring to broaden the coverage of promotions. Activities targeting students of secondary schools and tertiary institutions are organised to promote life and death education and green burial, while expos targeting at the middle-aged and the elderly are organised to educate the public to plan ahead for after-death arrangements.

To enhance public understanding about green burial and planning ahead for after-death arrangements, the Department organises seminars, expos and online publicity programmes which promote green burial, provide information on different aspects to strengthen public awareness and help them make the choice.

Changing the public's concept, attitude and cultural practice requires sustained and long-term efforts. The Department is committed to establishing long-term partnership

with different organisations and leveraging on their expertise, credibility, influence and network to gradually make green burial a mainstream choice. The Department identifies suitable partners for different age groups and organises a variety of activities, such as craft workshops to explore life education, “School of Life” promotional events, “Yu Lan Run” - a running event to bring out life planning through scenic spots, Green Burial Information Day, etc., to promote the concept of green burial to the public through different perspectives.

- 4) The Department endeavours to implement columbarium development projects. As at 31 December 2025, 8 public columbarium projects located at Diamond Hill in Wong Tai Sin, Cheung Chau, Wong Nai Chung Road in Wan Chai, Lai Chi Yuen in Mui Wo, Tsang Tsui in Tuen Mun, Wo Hop Shek Phase 1, Cape Collinson Road in Eastern District and Shek Mun in Sha Tin had been completed, providing around 280 000 new public niches in total. These niches have already been open for application for allocation. To meet future demand, the Department is taking forward projects at Wo Hop Shek, Siu Ho Wan and Kwai Chung, which are expected to provide more than 380 000 niches. The Department will continue to review the situation to plan and take forward new projects, with a view to maintaining a stable medium- and long-term supply of public niches.
- 5) In the 2025-26 financial year, the revised estimate of the expenditure on cemeteries and crematoria services provided by the Department, including the services for public columbaria and scattering of ashes in GoRs and at sea, was \$594.3 million. There is no separate breakdown of the expenditure by each type of service.

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