

To: Food & Health Bureau

Please see below my comments in red.

7. Members of the public are welcome to give views, in particular on the following matters –

**A.**

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**B.**

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**Increasing the supply of columbarium facilities to meet the overall public demand**

Although columbaria are essential facilities for the community, it is not easy to develop columbarium facilities in Hong Kong given our small geographical size and the large population as well as strong local resistance against the development of such facilities in their neighbourhood. Do you agree that all districts should collectively share the responsibility to develop columbaria so as to increase supply to meet the needs of the community? What kinds of measures do you think can be adopted to lessen local resistance to the construction of columbarium facilities? (see paragraphs 16 to 18 for details)

**I don't see the point of having the districts to share the responsibility. No one would like to have columbarian facilities near their neighbourhood. If this is acceptable in our culture, we don't need columbarian, everybody can keep the urns at home.**

Do you agree that existing cemeteries, which are already well supported by infrastructural and transport facilities, should be expanded or more columbarium facilities should be built therein to expedite the provision of such facilities? (see paragraph 17 for details) **Yes!!! Increasing supply of columbarium facilities should be done by expanding existing cemeteries, as the location is usually far from populated areas and well accepted by Hong Kong people.**

The BMCPC and religious bodies also play an important role in the provision of columbarium facilities. To augment the supply of columbarium facilities as soon as possible to meet public demand, do you agree that the BMCPC and religious bodies should be encouraged to expand their existing columbarium facilities or develop such facilities in other places? (see paragraph 20 for details) **Yes, if the religious bodies are already well-respected and recognized, not the fake religious bodies who use this as money making machine.**

**Encouraging the public to accept a more environmentally friendly and sustainable means for handling cremains**

The concept of sustainable development is generally accepted in the community. To promote the sustainable development of

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C.

columbarium facilities, do you agree that the public should be encouraged to accept more environmentally friendly and sustainable means for handling cremains? The Government has been actively promoting scattering of cremains in Gardens of Remembrance (GoRs) or in designated Hong Kong waters. Do you agree that the Government should step up the efforts to further promote these two ways of handling cremains? Do you have any other suggestions on alternative means of handling cremains? (see paragraphs 21 to 25 for details) **Absolutely, Hong Kong is surrounded by waters and we have so many islands, we should educate and encourage our people to do so for environmental and financial reasons.**

At present, public niches are allocated to bereaved families on a permanent basis. Given the limited supply of suitable land for columbarium development, do you think that it is the best arrangement for the Government to continue this perpetual interment practice? There is suggestion that a time-limited lease / an annual management fee should be introduced for public columbarium facilities (including urn grave facilities) to ensure that they will continue to serve their purpose as places for descendants to pay respect to the deceased. This can also help achieve sustainable development and better utilisation of niches. Do you think that the suggestion is feasible? **Will be difficult to enforce. How to find the descendants or descendants getting old and not capable of handling the administration would create problems. Where to put the urns if the timeline is up???**(see paragraphs 28 to 30 for details)

The Government may consider introducing an incentive scheme for the return of public niches to the Government for re-use in exchange for an ex-gratia allowance. Do you agree to the introduction of such incentive scheme by the Government? **Yes!!! This is more positive.** (see paragraph 31 for details)

#### **Enhancing consumer protection**

(7) To facilitate members of the public who are considering purchasing / preparing to purchase private columbarium niches to

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make an informed choice, the Government will publicise information of private columbaria. Do you have any suggestions on how to further strengthen consumer education? **Explain all the risks of private**

**columbaria.** (see paragraphs 41 to 45 for details)

**Enhancing regulation of private columbaria**

The Administration considers that in the longer run, a licensing scheme should be introduced for better regulating private columbarium development. A preliminary framework for such a scheme has been worked out and is set out in this public consultation document. Do you think the proposed licensing scheme is appropriate for enhancing regulation of private columbaria? (see paragraphs 46 to 51 for details)  
Some people do not welcome the existing private columbarium facilities in their districts. Meanwhile, those who have purchased niches therein are worried that the columbaria will not be able to continue operation under the new licensing system because they involve unauthorised developments or due to other reasons. In fact, given the inadequate supply of columbarium facilities, it will not be easy to handle the displacement of cremains. When facing such dilemma, how do you think the Government should deal with existing unauthorised private columbaria? (see paragraphs 52 to 58 for details)

**The government should bear most responsibility of supplying columbaria. It should be strict and clear about the licensing of columbaria as the consequences are serious, as we can all see now. Those who bought the niches before the licensing process are innocent and there should be a one time help from government to help relocate the niches. There should be a cut off date. And after that, people are responsible for their own risks. The licensing should take into account that private columbaria is a service business but not a high return property business. Perhaps there should be a price control.**

**Also, it's important that columbaria be away from the existing last remaining spiritual retreat areas in Lantau, like Luk Wu. In fact, areas like Luk Wu should be protected right away from invasion and destruction of commercial expansion. It took 100+ years to build this sacred area, it will be a shame if the government let it go to the hands of commercial investors.**

**The government should not be soft on this issue and let the illegal or unqualified columbaria find their way to go behind the rules, otherwise it will end up in a mess again.**

Signature :



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