

Managers of unlicensed guesthouses fined

Two women were fined \$12,000 and \$50,000 at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (April 24) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in September last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected a suspected unlicensed guesthouse on Pitt Street in Yau Ma Tei and two suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Nelson Street in Mong Kok. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented rooms in these guesthouses on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, these guesthouses did not possess licences under the Ordinance on the days of inspection. The women responsible for managing the premises were charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaenq@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

CSSA caseload for March 2019

The overall Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) caseload in March showed a drop of 736 cases, representing a decrease of 0.3 per cent compared with that of February, according to the latest CSSA caseload statistics released by the Social Welfare Department today (April 24).

The total CSSA caseload at the end of March stood at 224 603 (see attached table), with a total of 319 801 recipients.

Analysed by case nature, low-earnings cases registered a month-to-month decrease of 2 per cent to 3 422 cases. Both unemployment cases and old age cases decreased by 0.4 per cent to 11 696 cases and 141 280 cases respectively.

Permanent disability cases dropped by 0.3 per cent to 16 621 cases while single parent cases fell by 0.2 per cent to 24 382 cases. Ill health cases remained steady at 23 043 cases.

Phishing email related to The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited on phishing email, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on [the HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the email concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the email should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, April 24, 2019 is 103.8 (up 0.3 against yesterday's index).

Government welcomes MTRCL's extension of fare concession

The Government is concerned about the public transport expenses of the public and has closely monitored the public concern about the MTR fare adjustment. Since the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) confirmed earlier that

the fare adjustment for 2019/20 would be +3.3 per cent, the Government has requested the MTRCL to favourably consider providing more fare concessions to the public while taking into account its financial viability.

The MTRCL stated today (April 24) that it will provide Octopus passengers with a "3.3 per cent rebate" for each trip in 2019/20, extending it from the original six months to 40 weeks.

The Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, said he was pleased that the MTRCL has responded to the public concern and set aside additional resources to extend the "3.3 per cent rebate" for passengers. In effect, the fares of around 5 million Octopus passengers will remain unchanged for 40 weeks.

The existing MTR Fare Adjustment Mechanism is based on open and objective data with a direct-drive formula. The Government introduced a penalty arrangement for serious service disruption, a "Profit Sharing Mechanism", and an arrangement to take care of affordability for the public when the Government reviewed the mechanism with the MTRCL in 2013 and 2017. The MTRCL confirmed that the fare adjustment rate for 2019/20 would be +3.3 per cent.

The Government will continue to safeguard public interest and require the MTRCL to adjust its fare according to the mechanism. At the same time, the MTRCL should also respond to the public concern and offer more fare concessions for passengers, especially when the MTRCL is financially viable.