

Labour Department to hold seminar on Employment Ordinance

The Labour Department called for enrolment for a seminar on the Employment Ordinance to be held at 2.30pm on April 26 (Friday) at Hall, G/F, Banyan Garden, No.863, Lai Chi Kok Road, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon (entrance facing Sham Shing Road).

The main provisions of the Employment Ordinance (including wages, leave and termination of contract) will be introduced. In addition, the seminar will also cover the Minimum Wage Ordinance and points to note on the employment of foreign domestic helpers.

The seminar will be conducted in Cantonese and admission is free. Seats will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and the enrolment deadline is April 17 (Wednesday). The enrolment form can be downloaded from the department's website (www.labour.gov.hk). For enquiries, please call 2399 2386.

Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rate in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

Red flag hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (March 26) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

[Hong Kong and Australia sign Free Trade Agreement and Investment Agreement \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong and Australia signed today (March 26) a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and an Investment Agreement, which are comprehensive in scope, covering trade in goods, trade in services, investment, intellectual property, government procurement, competition and other related areas; and are modern and of high standard. The Agreements provide Hong Kong traders and investors with legal certainty and more favourable access to the Australian market, whilst creating more business opportunities and enhancing trade and investment flows between the two places.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, and the Australian Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Mr Simon Birmingham, signed the Agreements in Sydney, Australia today.

"Hong Kong and Australia, both staunch advocates of free trade, have today sealed two high quality deals. The commitments we made to each other far exceed our World Trade Organization commitments, thereby enabling our goods, services and investments to enter each other's market under more preferential terms. Against the prevailing uncertainties in the global economic environment, the two bilateral agreements, in providing high transparency and predictability for trade and investment, give a big boost of confidence to our rules-based trading system," Mr Yau said.

"On trade in services, the quality negotiated outcome generally represents Hong Kong's and Australia's best deal with our respective FTA partners. In some 140 services sectors that Australia has made specific commitment under the FTA, Hong Kong service providers are able to enjoy market access and treatment no less favourable than Australia's local service providers under like circumstances. In this FTA with Hong Kong, Australia has also committed to liberalising full range of its arbitration, conciliation and mediation services and certain rail transport services, which Australia has never offered to its other FTA partners, except New Zealand," he continued.

"Immediately upon the entry into force of the FTA, Hong Kong-originating

goods can enter Australia totally tariff-free and via simplified procedures. This tariff treatment is among the best offers Australia has extended to its FTA partners," he said.

"On investment, Hong Kong investors can enjoy more favourable access to the Australian market under the FTA as the monetary thresholds for investment screening have been raised. Investors from both places will also benefit from the modern provisions on treatment and protection under the new Investment Agreement, which will replace the one signed in 1993," he added.

Other benefits of the FTA include facilitative arrangements for business travel as well as provisions to facilitate access to each other's government procurement markets, effective protection of intellectual property rights and promotion of competition.

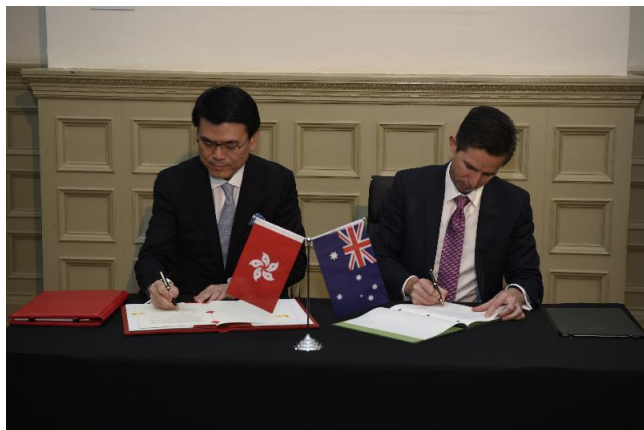
For key benefits of the Agreements to Hong Kong, please refer to the Annex. Full text of the Agreements will be uploaded to the Trade and Industry Department's website (www.tid.gov.hk).

"To help Hong Kong enterprises and investors expand their markets, further reinforce Hong Kong's status as an international trade and investment hub and establish our worldwide network of economic and trade connections, we have been actively seeking to forge FTAs and Investment Agreements with economies that have strong economic and trade connections with Hong Kong, markets with development potential or at strategic locations, as well as like-minded trading partners," Mr Yau said.

"The FTA with Australia is the fourth FTA that the current term of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has signed with its trading partners since taking office in July 2017," Mr Yau added.

The FTA and the Investment Agreement negotiations between Hong Kong and Australia commenced in May 2017 and were concluded within just 18 months in November 2018. They will take effect after Hong Kong and Australia have completed their respective internal procedures.

Australia was Hong Kong's seventh largest services trading partner in 2017, with the total services trade between the two sides amounting to HK\$44 billion. It was Hong Kong's 20th largest merchandise trading partner in 2018, and the total merchandise trade was about HK\$54 billion. On investment, as at the end of 2017, Australia ranked eighth among Hong Kong's destinations of outward direct investment, with a stock of HK\$134 billion, and it ranked 17th among Hong Kong's sources of inward direct investment, with a stock of HK\$33 billion.



[Update on measles cases](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (March 25) reported the latest developments in its investigations into measles cases and reminded the public again that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "The CHP has continued to closely follow up on the outbreak of measles infection concerning people working at the Hong Kong International Airport announced last week. At a meeting with the Airport Authority (AA) and airline sector this morning, CHP representatives briefed them on the latest situation of the measles cases and the CHP's control and prevention measures at the airport, and provided them with relevant health advice and information on disease prevention."

As a key measure of outbreak control, the CHP has started providing vaccination to people working at the airport who are non-immune to measles since last Friday. The vaccination exercise aims to protect those non-immune to measles. The target group refers to people working at the airport who are:

1. Born in 1967 to 1984;
2. Have not received two doses of measles vaccination; and
3. Have not been infected with measles before.

"For those who were born before 1967 in Hong Kong, it is expected that the majority of them have contracted measles in the past, and thus have antibodies against measles. Those who have received two doses of measles-containing vaccine, including the majority of people born in 1985 or after, will also have sufficient protection against measles in general," the spokesman explained.

The CHP has set up two vaccination stations at the airport to facilitate those in need and will continue to closely liaise with the AA to

explore ways to further enhance the vaccination arrangements. From today till Friday (March 25-29), those non-immune to measles working at the airport may receive measles vaccination at Port Health Office Health Post (South Arrival Apron Passenger Vehicle Lounge, Level 4, Terminal 1) and Multi-function Room, HKIA Tower, Level 5, Terminal 2 from 10am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm. The CHP will closely monitor and review the vaccination progress for people working at the airport. Arrangement after March 29 will be announced in due course.

From last Friday to yesterday (March 24), around 400 persons received measles vaccination at the vaccination station and 484 persons received the vaccination today. A hotline (2125 1122) is set up for public enquiries and operates from 9am to 5.45pm daily. As of 5pm today, the hotline received 550 enquiries.

On the supply of measles vaccines in Hong Kong, the DH maintains close liaison with the vaccine suppliers and learnt that the vaccine supply is currently stable. The DH has requested the suppliers to import extra quantities of measles vaccines to meet the local demand.

The spokesman said, "The CHP has issued letters to doctors and private hospitals today to provide them with the latest information on measles cases in Hong Kong. They are urged to implement appropriate infection control measures and reminded to notify the CHP of any suspected or confirmed cases. The CHP also provided contact information of measles vaccine suppliers to the private doctors."

The CHP's epidemiological investigations into the measles cases announced previously are ongoing. On the measles case announced yesterday involving a 27-year-old man, the public places he visited during the communicable period are listed below:

Date	Time	Place	End of medical surveillance for contacts
March 20	8.30am – 8.45am	Clinic of Dr Chan Lai-man (Room 3135, Lok Fu Shopping Centre, 3/F, Lok Fu, Kowloon)	April 10

March 21	8.40am – 9.05am	Clinic of Dr Chan Lai-man (Room 3135, Lok Fu Shopping Centre, 3/F, Lok Fu, Kowloon)	April 11
	3pm – 3.45pm	Town Health Integrated Medical Centre (Wong Tai Sin) (Shop 1, G/F, Kai Tak Garden Phase II, 121 Choi Hung Road, Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon)	

The spokesman explained that measles is a highly infectious disease caused by the measles virus. It can be transmitted by airborne droplets spread or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected persons, and, less commonly, by articles soiled with nose and throat secretions. A patient can pass the disease to other persons from four days before to four days after the appearance of skin rash.

The spokesman reminded, "The incubation period of measles ranges from seven days to up to 21 days. Contacts who are not immune to measles may develop relevant symptoms, such as fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes, in the incubation period. They should observe if they develop such symptoms in the period. If symptoms arise, they should wear surgical masks, stop going to work or school and avoid going to crowded places. They should avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially persons with weakened immunity, pregnant women and children aged below one. They should also report their symptoms and prior travel history to the healthcare workers so that appropriate infection control measures can be implemented at the healthcare facilities to prevent any potential spread."

"Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. Members of the public who are planning to travel to places with high incidence or outbreaks of measles should review their vaccination history and past medical history, especially people born outside Hong Kong who might not have received measles vaccination during childhood. The history of measles vaccination in Hong Kong is available in the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). Those who have not received two doses of measles-containing vaccines, with unknown vaccination history or with unknown immunity against measles are urged to consult their doctor for advice on vaccination at least two weeks before departure," the spokesman said.

Besides being vaccinated against measles, members of the public should take the following measures to prevent infection:

- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- Wash hands when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after

sneezing;

- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly;
- Clean used toys and furniture properly; and
- Persons with measles should be kept out of school till four days from the appearance of rash to prevent spread of the infection to non-immune persons in school.

For more information on measles, please visit the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). For outbreak news of measles outside Hong Kong or the latest travel health advice, please visit the website of DH's [Travel Health Service](#).