

Managers of unlicensed guesthouses fined

Three women were fined \$2,000 to \$15,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts and the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (December 4) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in April and May this year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected three suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Kam Shan in Tai Po, Shelley Street in Central and Paterson Street in Causeway Bay. 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 (hadlaeng@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".

Speech by FS at Vocational Training Council graduation ceremony

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the Vocational Training Council (VTC) graduation ceremony this afternoon (December 4):

Dr Chung (VTC Council Chairman, Dr Roy Chung), Dr Yau (Executive Director of the VTC, Dr Carrie Yau), honorary fellows, graduates, proud parents, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

It gives me great honour to be here today for the annual graduation ceremony of the Vocational Training Council.

I must say the VTC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, led by Dr Henry Shek, gave us all great pleasure in their stirring performance to begin today's ceremony.

Let me now congratulate today's graduates. You have just completed a critical stage in your life. A milestone we are delighted to recognise, and honour, on this happy day.

Your graduation, as hard-won as it surely was, is however a beginning rather than an end. Certainly this marks the beginning of a career for many of you, but it is also a marker in what will be a life-long pursuit of learning, of broadening your knowledge, and of expanding your life experience.

I look out at you this afternoon and I see, among the 3,000 or so students gathered here, parents and family members. I also see many teachers and others who have, in any number of ways, helped make this day possible for our graduates. In short, graduation is surely a collective honour, and I applaud you all.

I applaud, as well, for the six outstanding and distinguished leaders of industries who will be receiving the 2018 VTC Honorary Fellowship today. We are grateful for your significant contributions to the community and the development of vocational training in Hong Kong. You are truly role models to our graduates.

The VTC has since 1982 provided education and training for more than 200,000 students each year, giving Hong Kong youth the professional skills and knowledge for meeting the changing needs of our economy and the industries and businesses that drive it.

Thanks to VTC's efforts, 21,000 young men and women are graduating on this good day. Some 18,000 of them were full-time students. And they come from seven of VTC's 13 member institutions.

May I also take this opportunity to congratulate that, just a month ago, VTC officially opened its brand-new, state-of-the-art International Culinary Institute. Designed for some 2,000 students, the new Culinary Institute includes training kitchens and a training café, a wine forum, a hall of gastronomy, a sensory lab for food science education and much more.

As VTC marches on to nurture more of our youth, it has the Government's firm support. The current-term Government is fully committed to investing in education and manpower development. We believe this is essential to economic growth, social mobility and overall prosperity – for Hong Kong and for each and every one of you.

This Government has already introduced a variety of measures to boost

education at every level. For the Vocational and Professional Education and Training sector, we are increasing recurrent funding to the VTC by HK\$100 million a year.

An additional sum of HK\$234 million will be provided to the VTC to expand its Pilot Subsidy Scheme for Students of Professional Part-time Programmes.

More than financial resources, of course, the VTC's success is predicated on its professionalism and its tireless commitment to education, to our youth and to Hong Kong. For that, and so much more, I am truly grateful.

My congratulations, once again, to our graduates. I wish you all every success in your career aspirations, in realising your goals, whatever they may be.

Now allow me to add a few words in Chinese.

[Waste collector and data systems engineering company convicted for illegal handling of chemical waste](#)

A waste collector (Sheung Yip Electrical Metal) and a data systems engineering company (Enviro-Tech Engineering Company Limited) illegally produced, collected and stored waste lead-acid batteries (WLABs) and waste mineral oil. They were fined a total of \$25,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (December 4) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation.

During an enforcement operation in May this year, staff of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) found that the waste collector concerned collected WLABs from a data centre located at North Point Industrial Building, and transported the WLABs to an open recycling site in Yuen Long. About 400 (20 tonnes) WLABs and 30 drums (6 tonnes) of waste mineral oil were found being stored at the recycling site. After investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD confirmed that the waste collector illegally collected and stored WLABs and waste mineral oil at the open recycling site and resold them for a profit. The data systems engineering company concerned did not register the location for producing chemical waste (the data centre at North Point Industrial Building) as a chemical waste producer in accordance with the statutory requirement. The EPD subsequently prosecuted the waste collector and the data systems engineering company under the WDO and the Regulation.

The EPD spokesman said that WLABs (containing sulphuric acid and lead) and waste mineral oil are classified as chemical waste and relevant parties should register with the EPD as chemical waste producers in accordance with the Regulation. Chemical waste must be properly packaged, labelled and stored, and has to be collected by licensed chemical waste collectors for delivery to licensed chemical waste disposal facilities for treatment.

The spokesman said, "The EPD has recently sent letters to practitioners in the installation and maintenance of information systems, data centres and telecommunication industry to remind members of the trade that they should register as chemical waste producers for locations where WLABs are generated (such as locations with a data centre or a computer server system). Licensed chemical waste collectors should also be hired to deliver the waste to licensed chemical waste disposal facilities for treatment."

Anyone who engages in the illegal collection, storage and disposal of chemical waste will be prosecuted. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. For subsequent offences, offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment.

Members of the public may visit the EPD's website for more information about the control of chemical waste: www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/guide_cwc.html.

COI into the Diaphragm Wall and Platform Slab Construction Works at Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project to submit its report by February 26, 2019

The following is issued on behalf of the Commission of Inquiry into the Diaphragm Wall and Platform Slab Construction Works at the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project:

The Commission of Inquiry into the Diaphragm Wall and Platform Slab Construction Works at the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project will submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Chief Executive on or before February 26, 2019, upon approval of an extension of time by the Chief Executive in Council today (December 4).

The extension of time is needed for the Commission to consider all relevant evidence and complete its report due to the extensive scope of the inquiry, the complexity of the matters for examination and the large number of witnesses involved.

The ongoing substantive hearing will continue until December 21, 2018, and shall, on a provisional basis, resume on January 9, 2019. The Commission plans to finish all evidence and final submissions by all involved parties before the end of January 2019.

[Selected works from "2018 Tea Ware by Hong Kong Potters" competition to go on display at Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware](#)

The "2018 Tea Ware by Hong Kong Potters" exhibition will be held from tomorrow (December 5) to December 2 next year at the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware. The exhibition shows the unlimited creativity of local potters, with more than 100 works from this year's tea ware competition on display.

This year's competition received an enthusiastic response, with a record number of 451 entries submitted by 332 potters.

In the Open Category, the first prize was awarded to Chan Cheuk-yan's "Encounter", while the second and the third prizes went to Enders Wong's "Joint Call" and Kwok Ka-fei's "Grand Canyon" respectively. The six winning entries for the prize of excellence were Hui Chun-kit's "Eclipse"; Enders Wong's "Your Charm, Your Way"; Monica Lin's "Gentle Thoughts"; Yung Yuk-ming's "Reverie"; Tung Wing-yin's "Encounter"; and Kwan Sau-man's "Paper Cup".

In the School Category, the winner of the first prize was Lau Hui-yau's "Tip of Dawn at Sixteen", while the winners of the second and the third prizes were Nicholas Leung's "The Price of Peace" and Leung Ching-tung's "Tea Time" respectively.

The "Tea Ware by Hong Kong Potters" competition was first held by the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware in 1986 with the aim of promoting ceramic art in Hong Kong. This year's competition, the 11th edition, features 101 items of selected tea ware made by 88 local potters.

The opening ceremony of the exhibition was held today (December 4). Officiating guests included the Assistant Director of Leisure and Cultural

Services (Heritage and Museums), Mr Chan Shing-wai; two of this year's adjudicators – the Museum Expert Advisor, Ms Lai Suk-yee and product designer Mr Lee Chi-wing; and the Museum Director of the Hong Kong Museum of Art, Miss Eve Tam.

For more exhibition details, please visit the museum's website at www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/Museum/Arts/en_US/web/ma/mt-thematic-exhibition.html or call 2869 0690 for enquiries.

The Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware is located at 10 Cotton Tree Drive, Central, Hong Kong (inside Hong Kong Park).