

# Youth Development Commission convenes second meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the second meeting of the Youth Development Commission (YDC) today (June 19). At the meeting, members endorsed the YDC youth engagement plan and agreed to regularise the Youth Ambassadors Scheme (tentative name). Details are as follows:

(1) The YDC agreed to organise regular youth engagement activities, including regular visits to schools and district youth organisations for direct dialogue with students and young people of different backgrounds, e.g. young people from low-income families and non-Chinese speaking students, and to maintain close contact with the 18 District Youth Programme Committees. The YDC will organise focus group meetings and invite young people and relevant stakeholders to have in-depth discussions on specific issues related to youth development. The YDC will also hold a youth summit next year to examine the outcome of the YDC's work with stakeholders and listen to the views of young people. In addition, the YDC will make use of online platforms and social media to strengthen communication with young people.

(2) The YDC will regularise the Youth Ambassadors Scheme (tentative name) and recruit 100 young people each year. The purpose is to identify and nurture more young people who are committed and passionate about serving the community. The scheme will provide training to enhance participants' understanding of the social and public affairs of Hong Kong, while improving their team spirit, confidence, logical thinking, leadership skills and interpersonal relations. Participants will also have opportunities to take part in a wide range of programmes, including large-scale events and international conferences, international youth exchanges, community services and youth engagement activities. The YDC will announce details of programme specifics and recruitment arrangements in due course.

The meeting took note of the progress reports of the three Task Forces set up under the YDC. The three Task Forces, namely the Task Force on Youth Exchange and Internship, the Task Force on Youth Development Fund and Programmes and the Task Force on Youth Outreach and Engagement, convened their first meetings in June separately and commenced discussion on issues that fell within their respective scope.

The meeting noted that more than 70 000 Hong Kong young people would participate in exchange and internship programmes on the Mainland and overseas to be organised, funded or co-ordinated by the Government on average in one year. The YDC will conduct a half to full-day visit outside Hong Kong (tentatively Shenzhen) during the summer holidays for better understanding of the internship programmes.

The meeting noted that, through co-operation with non-governmental organisations, the Youth Development Fund supported around 190 young people to start their businesses during the first application cycle. The YDC will study how the Youth Development Fund can be enhanced to provide better support to young people to start their businesses, including those outside Hong Kong, e.g. in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area.

A dedicated website for the YDC was launched today to promote YDC activities to young people and relevant stakeholders in a more effective manner. The dedicated website contains information on youth development activities and programmes that are organised or funded by the YDC or the Home Affairs Bureau. The activities and programmes cover various areas including youth exchange, internship, innovation and entrepreneurship, life planning and life education. For more information, please visit [www.ydc.gov.hk](http://www.ydc.gov.hk).

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## Appointment of Ombudsman Selection Board

In response to media enquiry regarding a news report on the decision of The Ombudsman, Ms Connie Lau, not to renew her contract upon its expiry next year, a spokesman for the Administration Wing made the following statement:

The Ombudsman, Ms Connie Lau, informed the Government in February 2018 that she would not renew her contract upon its expiry in March 2019.

The Chief Executive respected Ms Lau's decision, which was due to personal reasons.

The Government thanked Ms Lau for her outstanding leadership over the years in providing an effective channel of redress for members of the public. The Ombudsman offers fitting recommendations to help government departments and public organisations improve their governance as well as enhance the efficiency of their operation and responsiveness to public needs. The Government will certainly continue to render its staunch support to Ms Lau and the work of the Office of the Ombudsman.

The Chief Executive has agreed to identify the next Ombudsman through open recruitment, and has established a Selection Board for the exercise.

The Selection Board for the new Ombudsman will be chaired by Mr Chow Chung-kong, with Mrs Fanny Law Fan Chiu-fun, Dr Simon Ip Sik-on and the Director of Administration as members.

The Administration Wing will invite executive search consultants to submit proposals for the open recruitment exercise in July. The consultant

engaged for the exercise will publish recruitment advertisements in August to invite potential candidates to apply for the post.

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## **HyD receives MTRCL's incident report on construction of reinforced concrete wall at To Kwa Wan Station of Shatin to Central Link**

Regarding the incident in which a reinforced concrete wall adjacent to staircases at the To Kwa Wan Station platform under the Shatin to Central Link project was not constructed in accordance with the construction drawings, the Highways Department (HyD) requested the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) on June 11 to submit an incident report with a detailed explanation of the cause of the incident and the rectification plan no later than June 18. The HyD received the report from the MTRCL this morning (June 19), and noted that the MTRCL subsequently made public the report. The department is deeply concerned about the supervision problems revealed in the report. The HyD is scrutinising the details in the MTRCL's report and will request the MTRCL to clarify and provide further information as necessary.

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## **Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (June 19) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From June 10 to 16, one community-acquired LD case was reported. The male patient, aged 77 with underlying illnesses, lives in Block 4, Kenswood Court, Kingswood Villas, Tin Shui Wai.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of June 16, 24 LD cases have been reported in 2018. In 2017 and 2016, there were 72 and 75 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using these devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not tap water. Also, clean and maintain them regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol;
- Remove strainers in water taps and shower heads quarterly for cleaning;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) and they need to be changed periodically;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute the infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow medical advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile (not distilled or tap) water to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain them regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled

freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2-µm filters. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and

- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:

1. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
2. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
3. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
4. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

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## [Pesticide residue exceeds legal limit in sample of Chinese parsley](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 19) announced that a sample of Chinese parsley was found to have pesticide residue at a level exceeding the legal limit. The CFS is following up on the case.

A CFS spokesman said, "The CFS collected the sample of Chinese parsley at a market stall in Ap Lei Chau Market for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained bifenthrin at a level of 0.34 parts per million (ppm), exceeding the maximum residue limit (MRL) of 0.05 ppm.

"Based on the level of pesticide residue detected in the sample, adverse health effects would not be caused under usual consumption."

Generally speaking, to reduce pesticide residues in vegetables, members of the public can rinse vegetables thoroughly under clean running water, and scrub produce with hard surfaces with a clean brush to remove dirt and substances including pesticides and contaminants from the surface and the crevices, when appropriate.

Any person who imports, manufactures or sells any food not in compliance with the requirements of the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap 132CM) concerning pesticide residues commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

Since the regulation came into effect on August 1, 2014, the CFS has taken over 146 100 samples at import, wholesale and retail levels for testing for pesticide residues. Together with the unsatisfactory sample announced today, a total of 223 food samples (including 215 vegetable and fruit samples) have been detected as having excessive pesticide residues. The overall unsatisfactory rate is less than 0.2 per cent.

The spokesman added that excessive pesticide residues in food may arise from the trade not observing Good Agricultural Practice, e.g. using excessive pesticides and/or not allowing sufficient time for pesticides to decompose before harvesting. The MRLs of pesticide residues in food set in the Regulation are not safety indicators. They are the maximum concentrations of pesticide residues to be permitted in a food commodity under Good Agricultural Practice when applying pesticides. In this connection, consumption of food with pesticide residues higher than the MRLs will not necessarily lead to any adverse health effects.

The CFS will follow up on the unsatisfactory result, including tracing the source of the food in question and taking samples for testing. Investigation is ongoing.