

Efforts made by Government to promote green burial as mainstream arrangements (with photo)

The Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, officiated at the Green Burial Campaign Launch Ceremony today (October 17) to unveil a series of promotional activities with the theme of "Green Burial – Love Living On" to encourage the public to adopt this choice that makes the environment sustainable and endures love.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr Tse said that efforts are being made by the Government to promote green burial as a more environmentally friendly and sustainable means of handling human ashes. Over the past decade, the prevalence of green burial has significantly increased. The number of green burial cases increased almost three-fold from about 3 400 in 2013 to about 9 400 in 2022. The Government will continue to provide and improve services and strengthen promotions so as to gradually make green burial a mainstream arrangement of handling ashes, thus achieving the policy objectives of being more environmentally friendly and promoting sustainable development.

Currently, there are 13 Gardens of Remembrance (GoRs) under the management of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). Another GoR will be located in the Shek Mun Columbarium in Sha Tin which is expected to be completed and commissioned by 2025. Moreover, the Government encourages non-governmental and religious organisations to build GoRs at suitable sites. With co-ordination from the Government, more green burial facilities at cemeteries managed by these organisations are in the pipeline.

At the same time, the FEHD will set up new commemorative facilities for green burial in Tsang Tsui GoR in Tuen Mun in this year, including a commemorative wooden artwork in an image of a Chinese boat by using recycled wood for families who previously adopted a green burial to show respect to the deceased. A memorial post box with local colours on the artwork also enables families to express their feelings or share thoughts of their lost loved ones.

In line with the Government's strategy in promoting the adoption of e-services, the FEHD will set up a one-stop burial portal to facilitate online applications for green burial services. The FEHD will also enhance the design of its websites and provide more convenient access to related information like "A One-stop Guide to After-Death Arrangements" and videos.

To further promote green burial, a series of publicity programme will be launched, including the recruitment of secondary and tertiary students as ambassadors, arranging more guided tours at GoRs, setting up promotion booths at FEHD facilities and shopping malls, arranging talks at elderly homes, as well as the promotion of life education to encourage early planning of the last mile of life with a positive attitude.

Mr Tse encouraged the public to make early planning of end of life, including signing up in the Green Burial Central Register to register one's wish for green burial and making it known to one's families. The registration is simple and easy. The FEHD will follow up appropriately if a deceased person with his or her wish registered is identified on the register upon cremation booking by the family members.

Apart from Mr Tse, other officiating guests at the Launch Ceremony included the Chairman of Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene of the Legislative Council, Ms Joephy Chan; the Deputy Chairperson of the Private Columbaria Licensing Board, Mr Ip Kwok-him; the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene, Professor Kenneth Leung; the Permanent Secretary for Environment and Ecology (Food), Miss Vivian Lau; the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene, Ms Irene Young; the Director of Architectural Services, Mr Edward Tse; and the Deputy Secretary for Environment and Ecology (Food), Ms Ivy Law.

