

# Government welcomes various sectors to help strengthen social distancing

A Government spokesman today (March 24) welcomed the closure of sports and recreational facilities in various clubs in support of the anti-epidemic strategy of the Government and expressed the hope that more organisations will follow suit.

The Government yesterday (March 23) announced a series of enhancements to anti-epidemic measures. Among them, the Government would request clubs on private recreational leases to close their recreational and sports facilities, changing rooms and children's playrooms on their premises to promote the reduction of social contacts and gatherings. The Government also appealed to other private clubs and facilities in residential complexes to adopt the same measure to reduce the risk of spreading of the virus.

The Home Affairs Bureau issued letters yesterday to lessees of all 65 sites granted by way of Private Recreational Leases to require them to close all sports and recreational facilities as soon as practicable until further notice. The Government spokesman is pleased to note that some clubs today closed the relevant facilities accordingly to support the Government's anti-epidemic work, adding that the Home Affairs Bureau will continue to follow up on the execution of the measure.

The Government noted that some private clubs outside of the category mentioned above also took the initiative to respond to the appeal by the Government. For example, the Hong Kong Club was closed starting tonight, providing only food take-out services for members, while the Hong Kong Jockey Club will suspend all its recreational facilities and large-scale banquets starting tomorrow (March 25). Welcoming the move, the Government spokesman said that voluntary participation by more organisations will help build social momentum toward fighting the disease together.

On the proposal to legislate for the temporary prohibition of the sale and supply of alcoholic drinks by restaurants, bars and clubs with liquor licences, the Government spokesman said that, as pointed out by the Chief Executive in her response to the media this morning, this is a very difficult issue and the Government is willing to continue to listen to the views of the industry and the community for further study.