

# Ombudsman probes Leisure and Cultural Services Department's allocation of swimming lanes in public swimming pools and its monitoring mechanism (with photo)

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Ms Connie Lau, today (July 17) announced a direct investigation into the mechanism of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) for allocating swimming lanes in public swimming pools to examine whether the mechanism is effective and the department has fulfilled its responsibility as the monitoring authority.

To promote sports development and training, the LCSD assigns certain time slots of some swimming lanes in its public swimming pools to six sports associations for training and examination purposes. These associations then allocate the lanes to their affiliated clubs.

Recently, there were media reports about unfairness in some sports associations' systems for allocating swimming lanes, resulting in undue advantage to the large-scale affiliated clubs at the expense of the smaller clubs. Moreover, there were allegations of irregularities such as transfer of benefits and violation of conditions of use.

A preliminary inquiry by the Office of The Ombudsman revealed that under the Central Lane Allocation Scheme that the LCSD has implemented since 2005, the LCSD will give priority and allocate swimming lanes to the aforesaid sports associations, which will then allocate the lanes to their affiliated clubs based on the associations' own rating systems. Nevertheless, there are queries on whether the LCSD has fulfilled its monitoring responsibilities to ensure that the rating systems are reasonable and those affiliated clubs are genuinely non-profit-making, and whether there are improper transfers of the right to use the swimming lanes.

Ms Lau said, "The Government has a duty to promote and support sports development. It is understandable that the Government has given priority and allocates some swimming lanes to several sports associations for their training and examination uses. However, as swimming lanes are valuable public resources, the Government must ensure good use of the limited recreational and sports facilities to meet public demands and balance the interests of different parties. When the LCSD gives those sports associations priority and grants them the right to allocate some swimming lanes, the department must ensure that the public resources are properly used. For instance, the LCSD should check if any of the swimming clubs currently using the swimming lanes have engaged in improper profit-making activities and violated the conditions

of use. Whether the LCSD has properly delivered its monitoring duties and taken due follow-up action therefore warrants our thorough investigation."

The ambit of this direct investigation covers:

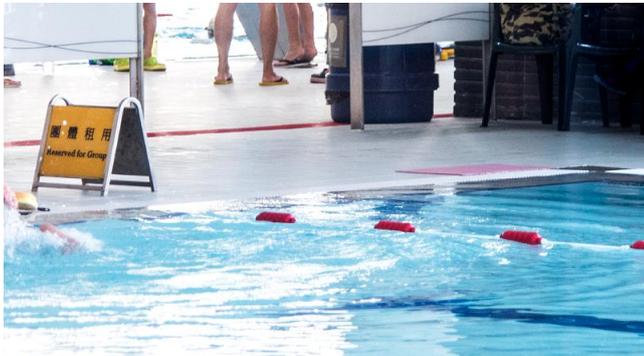
- (1) whether the LCSD's mechanism for allocating swimming lanes in public swimming pools is effective;
- (2) whether the LCSD has sufficient monitoring of sports associations' allocation of those lanes among their affiliated clubs;
- (3) whether the LCSD has sufficient monitoring of swimming clubs' compliance with the conditions of use of those lanes; and
- (4) any areas for improvement.

The Ombudsman now invites members of the public to send their views in writing to the Office of The Ombudsman by September 17, 2018:

Address: 30/F, China Merchants Tower, Shun Tak Centre  
168-200 Connaught Road Central, Hong Kong

Fax: 2882 8149

Email: [complaints@ombudsman.hk](mailto:complaints@ombudsman.hk)



---

## [Secretary for Justice in New York promotes Hong Kong as dispute resolution hub](#)

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, concluded her visit to Washington, DC, the United States (US) and started her visit to New York today (July 16, Eastern Standard Time).

At a roundtable discussion hosted by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in New York (HKETONY) and the Asia Society in the morning, Ms Cheng highlighted Hong Kong's role as a global business and financial centre and the importance of the rule of law.

Ms Cheng then met with the President of New York City Bar Association, Mr Roger Juan Maldonado, to exchange views on the legal sectors of the two places.

In the afternoon, Ms Cheng addressed a business luncheon co-hosted by the HKETONY and the National Committee on US-China Relations. She briefed participants from the legal profession and business sector on Hong Kong's strengths as an ideal hub for deal making and dispute resolution in Asia under "one country, two systems".

She highlighted Hong Kong's common law system, judicial independence and legal profession, which she said are important elements of the city's legal system. She pointed out that Hong Kong's robust legal system provides the bedrock for Hong Kong's development as a commercial and financial hub in Asia.

She added that Hong Kong will continue to provide a favourable trading and investment environment for its overseas partners and thrive as an ideal venue for deal making and dispute resolution with the dual advantages of "one country" and "two systems".

In the evening, Ms Cheng joined a talk hosted by the International Chamber of Commerce on the latest trends in international dispute resolution, including the increasing popularity of using mediation in resolving commercial disputes and the development of online dispute resolution.

She also paid a courtesy call on the acting Consul General of the People's Republic of China in New York, Dr Zhao Yumin.

Ms Cheng will call on the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations, Mr Ma Zhaoxu, tomorrow morning (July 17, Eastern Standard Time) before concluding her visit to the United States.

She will arrive in Hong Kong on July 18 (Hong Kong time).

---

## **Red flags hoisted at several beaches**

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 (July 17) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach, Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; Upper Cheung Sha Beach in Islands District; Clear Water Bay First

Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

---

## **Regional Traffic Day of Hong Kong Island**

Police yesterday (July 16) held the Regional Traffic Day on the Hong Kong Island to raise public awareness of road safety through stringent enforcement actions.

A total of 292 officers from Traffic Hong Kong Island and District Traffic Teams of Eastern, Wan Chai, Central and Western Districts were deployed to take enforcement actions at traffic black spots on the Hong Kong Island.

The operation resulted in the issue of 1 457 fixed penalty tickets and 68 summonses. Among the fixed penalty tickets and summonses issued, a total of 1 301 fixed penalty tickets were issued for illegal parking and the rest are for other traffic offences.

Police figures revealed that a total of 1 468 traffic accidents involving casualties occurred on the Hong Kong Island in the first six months of 2018, of which 511 cases involved pedestrian injuries.

Police will continue to take regular enforcement actions to ensure road safety.

---

## **Chai Wan Public Fill Barging Point closed**

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

The Civil Engineering and Development Department today (July 17) announced that as Standby Signal No. 1 has been issued, the Chai Wan Public Fill Barging Point has been closed at 8.30am until further notice.