

# Commission on Children convenes second meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the second meeting of the Commission on Children (Commission) today (October 30).

The Commission agreed to establish four Working Groups to render full support for the Commission to take forward its committed work programmes. Apart from the agreement at the first meeting of the Commission to establish two Working Groups to focus on research, public engagement, public education and publicity, the Commission agreed to establish two additional Working Groups, one on children with special needs and the other on children protection.

"The two additional Working Groups will respectively help review services and support for children with special needs and on children protection, as well as identify areas for improvement and recommend measures to bridge any service gaps on relevant support services. With the establishment of the four Working Groups, this would facilitate Members' more in-depth discussions on particular issues and formulation of practical proposals for the Commission's consideration. It would provide an effective mechanism for the Commission to address a host of priority issues for the early benefits of children," Mr Cheung said.

Meanwhile, the meeting noted the measures related to school education, parent education and home-school co-operation regarding play time for children. These measures include emphasising "child-centredness" as the core value of the curriculum, and adopting the approach of "learning through play" as a learning and teaching strategy at the kindergarten stage. For the stage of primary schools, schools and parents are encouraged to leave suitable room and time for students/children to decide on their schedule for the development of multiple talents. There is also active promotion of parent education and home-school co-operation to enable parents to better understand the characteristics of children's growth and learning and to give their children appropriate care and support.

The meeting also noted the efforts made by the Government in providing diversified, innovative and interesting outdoor play areas for children to have fun and enjoyment, develop their mind and body, and enhance their interaction with others. Major examples include ushering in new design concepts and bringing local community involvement in the design process, and organising creative and diversified activities in parks including collaboration with non-governmental organisations to enhance the play experience of children.

The meeting also noted the support measures in the education of children of ethnic minorities, in particular in supporting schools and non-Chinese

speaking (NCS) students to learn the Chinese language systematically, as well as providing multiple pathways for NCS students. These measures include continuing to implement and refine the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework (Learning Framework); continuing to commission tertiary institutions to provide school-based professional support service for schools admitting NCS students to enhance teachers' professional capability; adapting the school-based curriculum, learning and teaching strategies and assessments with reference to the Learning Framework; and providing additional resources to assist schools in stepping up support for NCS students.

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## **Contractor fined for violation of safety legislation**

Hipmex Form Work Construction Company Limited was fined \$40,000 at Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (October 30) for violation of the Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations. The prosecution was launched by the Labour Department.

The case involved a fatal accident that occurred at a construction site in Sheung Wan in which a worker was found dead at the bottom of a lift shaft on October 20, 2017. It was believed that on October 17, 2017, the deceased fell from the opening of the lift shaft on 19th floor to the bottom of the lift shaft in the course of work.

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## **CHP investigates case of Legionnaires' disease in elderly home**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 30) investigating a case 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.

The male patient, aged 55 with underlying illness, who lives in a residential care home for the elderly (RCHE) in Hung Hom, has developed fever since yesterday and was admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for treatment on the same day. The clinical diagnosis was pneumonia and he is in a stable condition.

The patient's urine sample tested positive for Legionella pneumophila serogroup 1 antigen upon laboratory testing.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had no travel history in the incubation period.

"Epidemiological investigations with the RCHE are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any. Relevant water samples and environmental swabs will be collected from potential sources for testing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Tracing of contacts including staff and residents in the RCHE where the patient stayed is ongoing and those identified will be put under medical surveillance. The CHP has provided health advice against LD to staff and residents, including those with weakened immunity who should use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing.

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 that 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.

Persons with weakened immunity should strictly observe the health advice below:

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

The public, including susceptible groups, should take heed of the general precautions against LD below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- 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 the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;

- 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 doctors' professional 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 the device 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  $\mu\text{m}$  filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
  1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
  2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
  3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
  4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
  5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

More information is available in 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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## **TAC discusses fare increase applications from CTB and NWFB and proposal on tunnel traffic rationalisation**

The following is issued on behalf of the Transport Advisory Committee:

The Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) discussed today (October 30) the applications for fare increases from the Citybus Limited (Franchise for Hong Kong Island and Cross-Harbour Bus Network) (CTB(F1)) and New World First Bus Services Limited (NWFB), as well as the Government's toll adjustment proposal for the three road harbour crossings (RHCs).

The TAC Chairman, Professor Stephen Cheung, said that in deliberating on the applications from CTB(F1) and NWFB, the TAC had considered and balanced a basket of factors under the Fare Adjustment Arrangement for franchised buses (FAA). These factors include public acceptability and affordability, service performance of the bus companies and the past and forecast financial performance of the companies, as well as a supportable fare increase rate computed through a formula making reference to changes in the Composite Consumer Price Index and the wage index. The TAC was also briefed on the outcome of the review of the FAA.

Professor Cheung said, "Similar to other fare increase applications, the TAC will submit its recommendation to the Government for consideration by the Executive Council."

In addition, Members of the TAC discussed the toll adjustment proposal proposed by the Government for the rationalisation of traffic distribution among the three RHCs, namely the Cross-Harbour Tunnel (CHT), Eastern Harbour Crossing (EHC) and Western Harbour Crossing (WHC). According to the proposal, tolls for private cars, taxis and motorcycles using the CHT and EHC will be increased, while the corresponding tolls for using the WHC will be lowered. The Government and the WHC franchisee have agreed in principle to a proposed WHC Toll Compensation Scheme.

Professor Cheung said, "Members noted that the Government used a transport numerical model with sound scientific basis and a large amount of data analysed to project traffic volumes under various toll scenarios, before proposing the toll adjustments for rationalising traffic distribution among the three RHCs. Members welcomed the proposed toll levels, which are expected to shorten the total peak-hour traffic queue lengths at the CHT and EHC by 10 per cent to over 40 per cent and reduce by as much as 13 minutes the tunnel travelling time for certain cross-harbour vehicles. By effectively alleviating cross-harbour traffic congestion and reducing the impact on non-cross-harbour traffic and many public transport passengers, the proposal is expected to generate about \$800 million of social cost savings per year and reduce emission from vehicles, for the overall benefit of society.

"The Government briefed Members in detail on the projected traffic volume under other toll adjustment suggestions raised by the community, such as reducing the magnitude of toll increases for private cars using the CHT and EHC. Members agreed that these suggestions would not be practicable from a traffic management perspective because they could result in traffic congestion at the EHC worse than not making any toll adjustments at all, or lengthen traffic queues at the WHC to an extent that could obstruct non-cross-harbour traffic."

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## **FS welcomes publication of annual report of Process Review Panel for the Securities and Futures Commission**

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, today (October 30) welcomed the publication of the annual report of the Process Review Panel for the Securities and Futures Commission (PRP), which covers the work of the PRP in 2017-18.

"Last year, the PRP has again conducted a comprehensive review of the internal processes and procedures of the Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) through selected cases. In its annual report, the PRP has made a number of observations and recommendations which are conducive to the fair and consistent exercise of the regulatory powers by the SFC. The work of the PRP has contributed to enhancing the transparency and accountability of the SFC," Mr Chan said.

"I would like to thank the Chairman, Dr Moses Cheng Mo-chi, the non-official members and ex-officio members of the PRP for their valuable contribution in the past year," he added.

The PRP is an independent panel established by the Chief Executive to review the internal operational procedures of the SFC and to determine whether the SFC has followed its internal procedures for ensuring fairness and consistency.