

## Government establishes Tree Review Panel

The Development Bureau (DEVB) announced today (December 16) the establishment of the Tree Review Panel to advise DEVB on complex tree cases.

The two members of the Panel are Dr Greg Moore and Mr Guy Watson, who are overseas experts in arboriculture. The Panel will take effect today for a term of three years.

Dr Moore is currently an Honorary Doctor of the School of Ecosystem and Forest Sciences of the University of Melbourne, Australia, and has taught plant science and arboriculture for 40 years. He has contributed to the development of Australian Standards in arboriculture and often teaches arboriculture around the world (including in Hong Kong).

Mr Watson is an experienced consulting arborist in the United Kingdom. He authored a number of field guides related to tree management published by the Arboricultural Association in the United Kingdom and has years of experience in teaching professional tree inspection courses in the United Kingdom and Hong Kong.

A DEVB spokesman said, "The two overseas experts have extensive tree management knowledge and experience in field assessment and diagnosis of trees, and are also familiar with local tree species and their features. As such, they have the ability to provide in-depth and professional research, analysis and advice on complex tree cases. They will also advise on matters related to the policy and technical aspects of tree management having regard to the prevailing circumstances."

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## Hong Kong Customs conducts spot checks on safety of plastic food wraps and food bags (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs today (December 16) announced results of its spot checks on plastic food wraps and food bags last month. A model of a plastic food wrap and a model of a plastic food bag were found without bilingual warnings or cautions, in contravention of the Consumer Goods Safety Regulation (CGSR), a subsidiary legislation of the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance (CGSO).

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Customs earlier received a referral from a related organisation that suspected non-compliant plastic food wraps and food bags were being supplied in the market. Customs immediately conducted spot checks and test purchases in various districts. Testing of the samples of the plastic food wraps and food bags confirmed that all complied with the relevant safety standard.

However, it was found that a model of a plastic food wrap and a model of a plastic food bag did not have attached the applicable bilingual warnings or cautions with respect to its safe keeping, use, consumption or disposal, in contravention of the CGSR.

Customs officers later conducted an operation and found that 15 boxes of the plastic food wrap without bilingual warnings or cautions were available for sale at a chain store in Hung Hom. The batch of plastic food wraps was then seized.

An investigation is ongoing.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the CGSO and the CGSR with a view to protecting consumers' safety.

Under the CGSO, it is an offence to supply, manufacture or import into Hong Kong consumer goods unless the goods comply with the general safety requirements for consumer goods. Under the CGSR, where consumer goods or their packages are marked with warnings or cautions with respect to their safe keeping, use, consumption or disposal, such warnings or cautions shall be in both English and Chinese languages.

The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year on first conviction, and a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years on subsequent conviction.

Members of the public may report any suspected unsafe consumer goods to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).



# Transcript of remarks by SLW on “Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2018” and social workers’ strike

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on "Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2018" and the social workers' strike after attending a radio programme this morning (December 16):

Reporter: Dr Law, I've just got two questions. First of all, now that Hong Kong is expected to be in recession, how worse do you think the poverty situation will get maybe next or the year after? The second question is, tomorrow we learnt that there is going to be another three-day strike plan by the social welfare sector. What's your view on their action?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: The first part of the question in fact is really indicative of the understanding of the poverty situation that we have released a couple days ago about the situation back in 2018. The figures are very much related to "relative poverty". In fact, it's more likely to have an increase in relative poverty when the economy grows. When the economy contracts, there is always a possibility that the relative poverty actually drops. So, it is a matter of relative poverty, but whenever we talk about poverty figures, we tend to always bear in mind that we are talking about "absolute poverty" but in fact we are not. We are talking about relative poverty.

As to the second question related to the welfare sector, people are calling for a strike. Technically it is very difficult to describe it as a strike in legal terms, but definitely people have the right to express their views, particularly their political views. For the Government, it is important to ensure that some of the needed services, particularly those for the disadvantaged, can be maintained and will not be affected. That is our concern. I guess particularly the social workers would abide by their basic code of practice and their action would not affect the welfare of those needy.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

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## Community Oral History Theatre Project

## in Kowloon City District to be Launched

The latest phase of an ongoing drama initiative that brings local stories from yesterday to today's stage will be launched next month, when the Community Oral History Theatre Project – Kowloon City District will commence with a theatre demonstration performance and sharing session at 3pm on January 15, 2020 (Wednesday), at Hung Hom Community Hall.

This opening event will introduce oral history theatre to senior citizens and other residents in Kowloon City District, while inviting the elderly from the District to join the project to tell their own stories in similar performances a later date. Admission is free with tickets.

During the January demonstration performance, an excerpt of a drama production entitled "Sai Kung, Therefore I Live" (in Cantonese) will be performed. Featuring the simple yet original stories of Sai Kung locals, the show will be performed by elderly participants of the Community Oral History Theatre Project – Sai Kung District, who are presenting the current version of the project. During the show the performers will re-enact personal Sai Kung stories that are integral to their lives. After the show they will share their experiences related to joining the project.

Free tickets and seating will be distributed from today (December 16) with a maximum of four tickets per person at the following locations on a first-come, first-served basis:

- \* Yan Chai Hospital Ng Wong Yee Man Neighbourhood Elderly Centre (G/F, 55 Hau Wong Road, Kowloon City);
- \* Caritas Elderly Centre – Sai Kung (G/F, 69-75 Man Nin Street, Sai Kung);
- \* Kowloon City Home Affairs Enquiry Centre (LG/F, Kowloon City Government Offices, 42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom);
- \* Enquiry Counter, Ko Shan Theatre (77 Ko Shan Road, Hung Hom);
- \* Enquiry Counter, Hong Kong Cultural Centre (10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui); and
- \* Enquiry Counter, Hong Kong City Hall Low Block (5 Edinburgh Place, Central).

Elderly residents of Kowloon City District interested in performing in this project can complete and return the application form on-site after the demonstration performance. The application form can also be downloaded from the website of the Audience Building Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) ([www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/ab/img/pdf/applicationform\\_kowlooncitiy.pdf](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/ab/img/pdf/applicationform_kowlooncitiy.pdf)). Completed forms should reach the Office by fax or by post on or before February 14. If the number of applications exceeds the quota, auditions will be arranged to select suitable candidates.

Since its launch in 2009, the Community Oral History Theatre Project has been implemented in several districts, namely Sham Shui Po District, Kwun Tong District, Islands District (Tai O), Eastern District, Sha Tin District, Central and Western District, and is now being run in Sai Kung District. For elderly Kowloon City District participants, a series of workshops offering drama training will be arranged, and their personal experiences and recollections in the District will be compiled and developed into plays, providing an opportunity for them to recount their local stories onstage. The process of turning personal histories into drama fare can also help the younger generation understand the days of their elders and reflect on their own lives.

The project is co-organised by the LCSD, Chung Ying Theatre Company, Yan Chai Hospital Ng Wong Yee Man Neighbourhood Elderly Centre and Caritas Elderly Centre – Sai Kung.

Hung Hom Community Hall is located at UG/F & 1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices, 42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom. For enquiries, please call 2591 1300 (LCSD), 8106 8336 (Chung Ying Theatre Company), 2718 8331 (Yan Chai Hospital Ng Wong Yee Man Neighbourhood Elderly Centre) or 2792 6205 (Caritas Elderly Centre – Sai Kung), or visit [www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/ab/en/OH\\_details\\_kowlooncity.php](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/ab/en/OH_details_kowlooncity.php)

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## **90 per cent Guarantee Product starts receiving applications**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

HKMC Insurance Limited (HKMCI), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation Limited, announces that, applications under the 90 per cent Guarantee Product of the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme (SFGS) are to be received starting from today (December 16).

HKMCI welcomes all lenders under the SFGS to participate in offering loans under the 90 per cent Guarantee Product. Over twenty lenders have indicated their interest, of which several major banks have confirmed to start receiving applications from today. These include Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited, DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited, Hang Seng Bank Limited, Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) Limited and the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited. It is envisaged that more lenders will join in the future.

The 90 per cent Guarantee Product aims to provide additional support to smaller-sized enterprises, businesses with relatively less operating experience, as well as professionals seeking to set up their own practices,

to obtain financing. A total of HK\$33 billion will be guaranteed for the product by the Government. Each eligible enterprise can obtain guarantee for term loans up to HK\$6 million, with a maximum guarantee period of five years and the same guarantee fee rate as the existing 80 per cent Guarantee Product. The application period will last until June 30, 2022.

For public enquiries, please call the SFGS Hotline at 2536 0392.