

Head 49 — FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE DEPARTMENT

Controlling officer: the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene will account for expenditure under this Head.

Estimate 2022–23 **\$10,534.5m**

Establishment ceiling 2022–23 (notional annual mid-point salary value) representing an estimated 11 494 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2022 and as at 31 March 2023..... **\$4,029.6m**

In addition, there will be an estimated 21 directorate posts as at 31 March 2022 reducing by one post to 20 posts as at 31 March 2023.

Commitment balance..... **\$74.8m**

Controlling Officer's Report

Programmes

Programme (1) Food Safety and Public Health	This programme contributes to Policy Area 2: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety (Secretary for Food and Health).
Programme (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services	These programmes contribute to Policy Area 32: Environmental Hygiene (Secretary for Food and Health).
Programme (3) Market Management and Hawker Control	
Programme (4) Public Education and Community Involvement	This programme contributes to Policy Area 2: Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety (Secretary for Food and Health) and Policy Area 32: Environmental Hygiene (Secretary for Food and Health).

Detail

Programme (1): Food Safety and Public Health

	2020–21 (Actual)	2021–22 (Original)	2021–22 (Revised)	2022–23 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	1,497.5	1,544.0	1,501.9 (–2.7%)	1,565.1 (+4.2%)
				(or +1.4% on 2021–22 Original)

Aim

2 The aim is to ensure that food available for human consumption is wholesome, hygienic and safe; and to safeguard public health through testing and control of live food animals and effective pest control.

Brief Description

3 The work involves:

- conducting risk assessment on food and providing timely information to the public;
- investigating and managing food incidents;
- exercising import control on high-risk food and issuing health certificates for food exports;
- exercising import control on live food animals;
- conducting inspections and tests on live food animals at licensed slaughterhouses;
- providing meat inspection services at licensed slaughterhouses;
- conducting food surveillance at various points of the food chain and taking enforcement actions;
- promoting the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) approach to the trade and the adoption of HACCP-based food safety plans;
- ensuring prepackaged food for sale is properly labelled;
- conducting risk assessment on pests affecting public health;
- taking control measures to prevent vector-borne diseases; and
- investigating incidents of vector-borne diseases.

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4 The key performance measures are:

Targets

	Target	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Plan)
initiating investigation of reports of food unfit for human consumption within 24 hours (%)	100	100	100	100
applications for import of game, meat and poultry to be processed within four working days (%) ^λ	98	100	100	98
applications for import of milk and milk products to be processed within 12 working days (%)	98	100	99	98
applications for import of frozen confections to be processed within 12 working days (%)	98	100	99	98
applications for export or re-export food health certificates to be processed within 12 working days (%)	98	100	100	98
issuing veterinary health certificates for export food containing animal products within two working days (%)	100	100	100	100
testing pigs for beta-agonists (% of lots)	98	100	100	98
conducting inspections of farms exporting food animals to Hong Kong (no. of farms)	35	53 [@]	62 [@]	35
food surveillance through testing of food samples (no. of food samples tested per 1 000 population per year)	9	9	9	9
initiating investigation of complaints about food labelling within three working days (%)	100	100	100	100
initiating pest control measures within 24 hours upon receiving report of vector-borne diseases (%)	100	100	100	100
dealing with complaints on wasps/bees infestation within six working days (%)	100	100	100	100

^λ Revised description of the previous target “applications for import of game, meat and poultry to be processed within five working days” as from 2022. The number of processing days of applications for import of game, meat and poultry is reduced from five to four working days after reviewing the business processes.

[@] Document assessments were conducted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Indicators

	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Estimate)
food complaints handled	4 092	5 260	5 300
applications for import of game, meat and poultry	1 286 ^γ	718 ^γ	720
applications for import of milk and milk products	464	420	420
applications for import of frozen confections	547	496	500
export or re-export food health certificates issued	275	317	320
veterinary health certificates for export food containing animal products issued	1 310	1 521	1 520
targeted inspections of food trucks at food control points	12 000	12 304	12 000
samples taken from food animals for testing of veterinary drug residues	32 208	30 131	30 000
food samples taken for testing	65 271	65 539	65 500
labels checked	55 398	55 196	55 200
HACCP seminars/workshops	13 ^α	33	33
poison treatments of rodent infestation in building blocks	100 101	109 685	109 700
no. of rodent trappings	81 830	86 164	90 000

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	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Estimate)
mosquito breeding places eliminated	69 771	72 012	72 000
pest control surveys conducted	10 883	11 343	11 300

γ There has been a reduction in the number of applications for import permissions since 2020 as some importers were no longer required to apply for such permissions and some permissions were issued with a longer validity period, following a business process review in March 2020.

α The decrease in seminars/workshops conducted in 2020 was due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2022–23

5 During 2022–23, the Department will:

- continue to review and update local food safety standards, guidelines and regulatory arrangements such as those for veterinary drug residues in food, and the composition, nutrition and health claims for formula products for infants and young children;
- continue to re-engineer the workflow, and revamp and develop new information technology systems for the Centre for Food Safety for more effective management of data in food import and food safety incidents; and
- introduce night rodent control operations in all districts, and continue to take forward other initiatives to enhance pest control services, particularly in respect of mosquitoes and rodents, to strengthen response to vector-borne diseases and vector surveillance programmes.

Programme (2): Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

	2020–21 (Actual)	2021–22 (Original)	2021–22 (Revised)	2022–23 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	5,639.2	5,889.0	5,809.5 (–1.3%)	6,441.7 (+10.9%)
				(or +9.4% on 2021–22 Original)

Aim

6 The aim is to provide quality environmental hygiene services and facilities, and to safeguard public health through licensing and regulation of licensed food premises.

Brief Description

7 The work involves:

- providing efficient and effective public cleansing services, including street cleansing and household waste collection, and management of public cleansing facilities such as public toilets and refuse collection points;
- licensing and inspecting food premises, and taking enforcement actions against unlicensed and unhygienic food premises;
- processing liquor licence applications and providing administrative support to the Liquor Licensing Board;
- licensing private swimming pools, commercial bathhouses, places of public entertainment, funeral parlours, undertakers, karaoke establishments in restaurants, slaughterhouses and offensive trades, and taking enforcement actions in relation to these activities;
- abating environmental nuisances relating to dripping air-conditioners and water seepage and cleaning up illegal refuse deposit blackspots;
- managing cremation and burial facilities, including public cemeteries, crematoria and columbaria; and
- regulating private columbaria under the Private Columbaria Ordinance (Cap. 630).

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8 The key performance measures are:

Targets

	Target	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Plan)
<i>Cleansing</i>				
completion of first round street sweeping services on main roads before 9:00 a.m. to ensure removal of over-night street litter (%).....	99	100	100	99
<i>Licensing of food premises</i>				
holding of Application Vetting Panel meeting for restaurant licences within 20 working days from passing of initial screening (%)	99	100	100	99
issuing of food business licences within seven working days from confirmation of compliance (%).....	99	99	99	99
issuing of provisional licences for restaurants and other food premises within one working day from receipt of acceptable Certificates of Compliance for submissions over the counter (%)	99	100	100	99
issuing of liquor licences and club liquor licences within five working days from approval by Liquor Licensing Board (%).....	99	100	100	99
<i>Licensing of private swimming pools, commercial bathhouses, places of public entertainment, funeral parlours, undertakers, karaoke establishments in restaurants, slaughterhouses and offensive trades</i>				
issuing of Letters of Requirements within seven working days from clearance with concerned departments (%).....	99	100	100	99
issuing of licences within seven working days from confirmation of compliance (%).....	99	100	100	99
<i>Cemeteries and crematoria</i>				
booking of cremation sessions within 15 days (%).....	99	100	100	99
allocation of burial spaces on the day of application (%)	99	100	100	99

Indicators

	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Estimate)
refuse collected (tonnes)	2 231 610	2 238 212	2 238 000
recurrent expenditure per tonne of refuse collected (\$)Δ.....	298	295	295
sludge collected by gully emptiers (tonnes).....	3 488	3 422	3 400
restaurant licences	15 863	16 148	16 100
other food-related licences (e.g. liquor, food factory, bakery).....	22 374	23 879	23 900
restricted food permits (e.g. sushi and milk).....	8 559	10 200	10 200
applications for new food business licences	4 363	4 920	4 900
applications for new restricted food permits.....	2 182	3 601	3 600
inspections to food premises	240 808	255 907	255 900
raids against illegal slaughtering.....	12	12	12

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	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Estimate)
prosecutions against food premises			
licensed.....	3 129	3 090	3 100
unlicensed.....	3 220	4 833	4 800
food business licences suspended/cancelled	78	60	60
courses/seminars for Hygiene Supervisors	102	114	113
applications for private swimming pools, places of public entertainment and other licences (excluding applications for temporary licences).....	88	80	80
inspections conducted to private swimming pools, places of public entertainment, etc.....	12 981	13 758	13 800
no. of cremations provided			
body.....	46 465	48 106	49 200
skeletal	1 672	1 690	1 700
no. of burials conducted			
coffin	948	843	800
urn	635	679	650
exhumation permits issued.....	3 681	4 273	4 300

Δ The figures represent unit expenditure for the respective financial years ending 31 March.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2022–23

9 During 2022–23, the Department will continue to:

- implement the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme to improve the design and facilities of existing public toilets in phases, and continue to improve the planning, provision and management of public toilets;
- try out dedicated contracts to enhance public toilet cleansing;
- take stringent enforcement actions against unlicensed food premises and food premises which pose immediate health hazards or with illegal extension of food business areas;
- explore and apply new technology and automation to enhance environmental hygiene services;
- strengthen street cleansing, refuse collection and clearance work and step up related enforcement and prosecution as targeted measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic;
- take forward plans and projects to provide more crematorium and columbarium facilities;
- allocate new niches;
- implement the Private Columbaria Ordinance by supporting the Private Columbaria Licensing Board in processing applications for a licence or other specified instruments for operating a private columbarium, and taking enforcement actions under the Ordinance; and
- facilitate the Environmental Protection Department in taking over the management of refuse collection points and household refuse collection services from the Department as announced in the 2021 Policy Address.

Programme (3): Market Management and Hawker Control

	2020–21 (Actual)	2021–22 (Original)	2021–22 (Revised)	2022–23 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	2,191.6	2,342.5	2,328.6 (–0.6%)	2,455.3 (+5.4%)
				(or +4.8% on 2021–22 Original)

Aim

10 The aim is to provide new public market facilities at suitable locations, enhance viability of and maintain a clean and hygienic environment in existing public markets, and control on-street hawking activities.

Brief Description

11 The work involves:

- providing new public market facilities at suitable locations;
- managing and maintaining existing public markets, including modernisation works as appropriate;
- inspecting public markets to ensure cleanliness and compliance with tenancy requirements and conditions;

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- controlling and containing on-street hawking activities and obstruction;
- managing licensed hawker pitches, hawker permitted places and hawker bazaars; and
- taking enforcement actions.

12 The key performance measures are:

Targets

	Target	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Plan)
markets with common parts cleansed at least three times a day (%).....	100	100	100	100
stalls let (%) ^θ	85	87	88	90
responding to complaints against illegal hawking in built-up areas within 30 minutes (%).....	98	99	100	98

^θ In calculating the letting percentage, the number of stalls set aside for designated purposes has been included in the total number of stalls for letting.

Indicators

	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Estimate)
licensed hawkers			
fixed pitch hawkers	5 246	5 268	5 400
itinerant hawkers	348	330	320
estimated no. of unlicensed hawkers.....	1 115	1 149	1 100
raids by Hawker Control Teams	119 854	118 467	118 500
joint operations against illegal hawking			
with other departments	1 759	2 271	2 300
hawker blackspots	45	45	45

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2022–23

13 During 2022–23, the Department will:

- continue to plan new public market facilities at suitable locations and take forward the proposed projects;
- continue the comprehensive review on public markets, with a view to formulating concrete improvement proposals for the management of public markets;
- continue to implement the Market Modernisation Programme to improve facilities of existing public markets;
- take action to close public markets which are under-utilised;
- strengthen toilet cleansing and refuse collection services in public markets;
- extend night rodent control operations to all public markets and hawker bazaars; and
- continue to enforce against shop front extensions.

Programme (4): Public Education and Community Involvement

	2020–21 (Actual)	2021–22 (Original)	2021–22 (Revised)	2022–23 (Estimate)
Financial provision (\$m)	67.6	82.4	74.5 (–9.6%)	72.4 (–2.8%)

(or –12.1% on
2021–22 Original)

Aim

14 The aim is to promote food safety, maintenance of a hygienic environment and green burial through partnership with the community and multimedia publicity campaigns.

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Brief Description

15 The work involves:

- enhancing public awareness of the importance of food safety and empowering consumers to make informed choices;
- educating the public on their responsibility in maintaining a clean and hygienic living environment;
- organising targeted public education and publicity programmes to mobilise community involvement and support for activities in keeping the environment clean; and
- promoting green burial as a more sustainable way to dispose of cremated human ashes.

16 The Department disseminates food safety, keep clean and green burial messages through television and radio Announcements in the Public Interest (APIs), social media such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, mobile applications, banners, posters, publicity stickers, pamphlets, leaflets and a publicity vehicle, as appropriate. In addition, talks and support are given at food safety and environmental hygiene activities organised by district bodies, non-governmental organisations, community groups and schools.

17 The key performance measures are:

Targets

	Target	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Plan)
responding to requests from primary and secondary schools for talks on food safety and environmental hygiene within one week (%)¶.....	100	100	100	100
responding to requests for information/ talks on food safety and environmental hygiene within one week (%).....	100	100	100	100
responding to requests from day care centres and residential care homes for the elderly for talks on green burial within one week (%)Φ.....	100	100	100	100
publicity campaigns	3	0#	1	1

¶ Revised description of the previous target “primary and secondary schools approached for talks on food safety and environmental hygiene” as from 2021.

Φ Revised description of the previous target “day care centres and residential care homes for the elderly approached for talks on green burial” as from 2021.

No publicity campaign was arranged in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Indicators

	2020 (Actual)	2021 (Actual)	2022 (Estimate)
seminars and activities for general public	447ε	958	975
television APIs	0	0	1
radio APIs.....	1	1	1
outreaching programmes targeted at schools	10ε	19	18
school talks on food safety and environmental hygiene	125ε	241	405

ε The decrease in publicity activities in 2020 was due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2022–23

18 During 2022–23, the Department will:

- continue the efforts in promoting public health, environmental hygiene and food safety, with special emphasis on domestic hygiene, through seminars and activities, and in collaboration with District Health Centres;
- continue to devise and implement a strategic plan for encouraging reduced intake of salt and sugars in food to promote a healthy diet; and
- continue to promote green burial, particularly in respect of promotion of a central registration scheme.

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ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL PROVISION

	2020–21 (Actual) (\$m)	2021–22 (Original) (\$m)	2021–22 (Revised) (\$m)	2022–23 (Estimate) (\$m)
Programme				
(1) Food Safety and Public Health	1,497.5	1,544.0	1,501.9	1,565.1
(2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services	5,639.2	5,889.0	5,809.5	6,441.7
(3) Market Management and Hawker Control	2,191.6	2,342.5	2,328.6	2,455.3
(4) Public Education and Community Involvement	67.6	82.4	74.5	72.4
	9,395.9	9,857.9	9,714.5 (–1.5%)	10,534.5 (+8.4%)
				(or +6.9% on 2021–22 Original)

Analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision

Programme (1)

Provision for 2022–23 is \$63.2 million (4.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2021–22. This is mainly due to increased requirement for operating expenses. There will be a decrease of one post in 2022–23.

Programme (2)

Provision for 2022–23 is \$632.2 million (10.9%) higher than the revised estimate for 2021–22. This is mainly due to new initiatives to strengthen cleansing and refuse collection services. There will be a net decrease of one post in 2022–23.

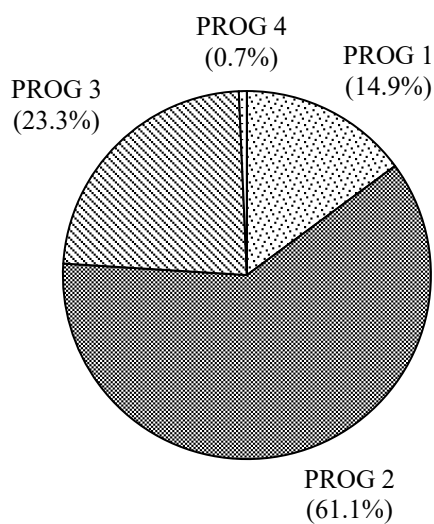
Programme (3)

Provision for 2022–23 is \$126.7 million (5.4%) higher than the revised estimate for 2021–22. This is mainly due to increased requirement for operating expenses and a net increase of one post in 2022–23.

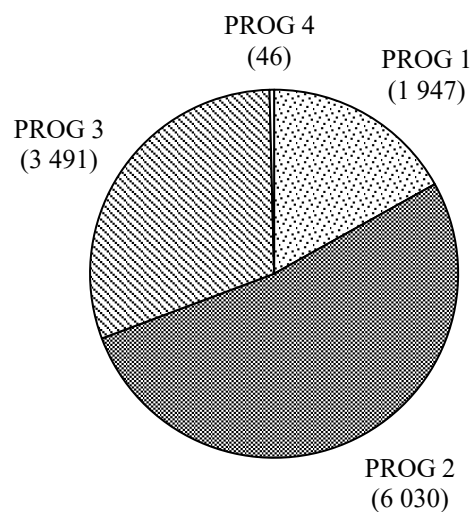
Programme (4)

Provision for 2022–23 is \$2.1 million (2.8%) lower than the revised estimate for 2021–22. This is mainly due to decreased requirement for operating expenses.

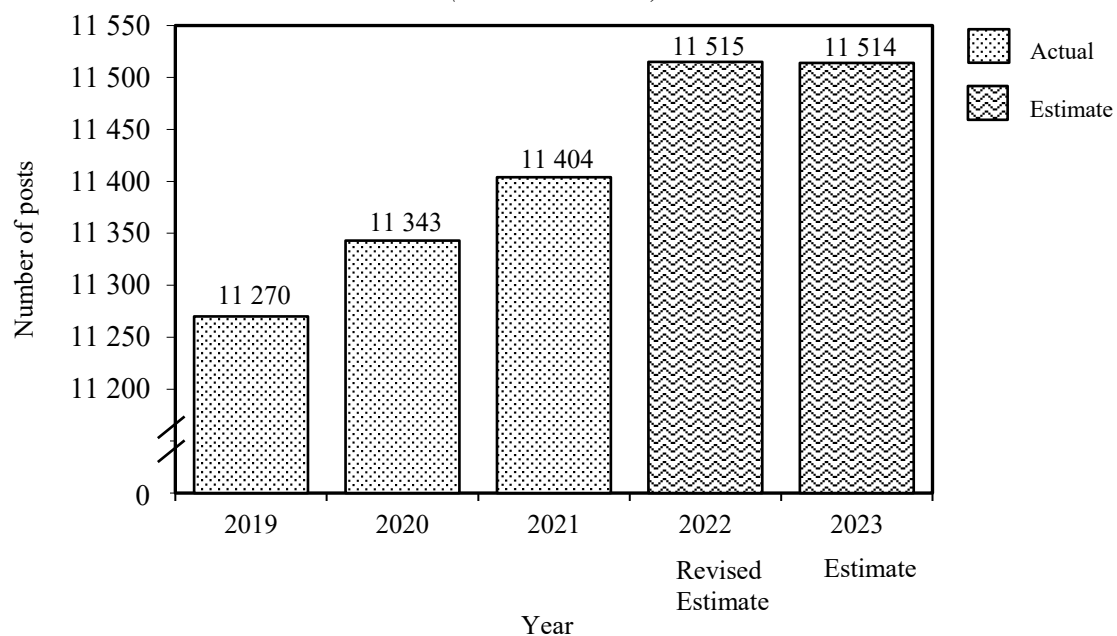
*Allocation of provision
to programmes
(2022-23)*



*Staff by programme
(as at 31 March 2023)*



*Changes in the size of the establishment
(as at 31 March)*



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Sub-head (Code)		Actual expenditure 2020–21	Approved estimate 2021–22	Revised estimate 2021–22	Estimate 2022–23
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Operating Account					
	Recurrent				
000	Operational expenses	9,219,131	9,609,588	9,507,810	10,290,802
	Total, Recurrent.....	9,219,131	9,609,588	9,507,810	10,290,802
	Non-Recurrent				
700	General non-recurrent	1,350	30,000	25,207	22,482
	Total, Non-Recurrent.....	1,350	30,000	25,207	22,482
	Total, Operating Account	9,220,481	9,639,588	9,533,017	10,313,284
Capital Account					
	Plant, Equipment and Works				
661	Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote).....	175,419	218,309	181,523	221,202
	Total, Plant, Equipment and Works.....	175,419	218,309	181,523	221,202
	Total, Capital Account.....	175,419	218,309	181,523	221,202
	Total Expenditure	9,395,900	9,857,897	9,714,540	10,534,486

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Details of Expenditure by Subhead

The estimate of the amount required in 2022–23 for the salaries and expenses of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is \$10,534,486,000. This represents an increase of \$819,946,000 over the revised estimate for 2021–22 and \$1,138,586,000 over the actual expenditure in 2020–21.

Operating Account

Recurrent

2 Provision of \$10,290,802,000 under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is for the salaries, allowances and other operating expenses of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

3 The establishment as at 31 March 2022 will be 11 515 posts including four supernumerary posts. It is expected that there will be a net decrease of one post in 2022–23. Subject to certain conditions, the controlling officer may under delegated power create or delete non-directorate posts during 2022–23, but the notional annual mid-point salary value of all such posts must not exceed \$4,029,558,000.

4 An analysis of the financial provision under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* is as follows:

	2020–21 (Actual) (\$'000)	2021–22 (Original) (\$'000)	2021–22 (Revised) (\$'000)	2022–23 (Estimate) (\$'000)
Personal Emoluments				
- Salaries	3,808,005	3,946,434	3,838,948	4,016,001
- Allowances	50,156	54,785	58,628	58,628
- Job-related allowances.....	86,211	82,558	90,486	90,486
Personnel Related Expenses				
- Mandatory Provident Fund contribution	32,694	27,041	27,653	28,455
- Civil Service Provident Fund contribution	281,220	351,971	317,950	379,375
Departmental Expenses				
- General departmental expenses	4,960,527	5,146,457	5,173,823	5,717,520
Other Charges				
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission.....	318	342	322	337
	9,219,131	9,609,588	9,507,810	10,290,802

Capital Account

Plant, Equipment and Works

5 Provision of \$221,202,000 under *Subhead 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)* represents an increase of \$39,679,000 (21.9%) over the revised estimate for 2021–22. This is mainly due to increased funding requirement for replacement of vehicles and equipment.

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Commitments

Sub-head (Code)	Item (Code)	Ambit	Approved commitment	Accumulated expenditure to 31.3.2021	Revised estimated expenditure for 2021–22	Balance
			\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<i>Operating Account</i>						
700		<i>General non-recurrent</i>				
	858	Ex-gratia payment to Food and Environmental Hygiene Department market tenants affected by market development plans	100,000	—	25,207	74,793
		Total	100,000	—	25,207	74,793
			<u>100,000</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>25,207</u>	<u>74,793</u>