

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2020)

Head: (42) Electrical and Mechanical Services Department
Subhead (No. & title): (700) General non-recurrent
Programme: (2) Mechanical Installations Safety
Controlling Officer: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (Alfred W H SIT)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme (LIMSS), will the Government please advise the Committee of the following:

- 1) Will the Government consider relaxing the rateable value threshold to \$202,500 for urban areas and \$155,000 for the New Territories for buildings aged 30 years or above in order to assist more building owners in need?
- 2) How many practitioners are there in the lift trade? Is the manpower sufficient to cope with the need of the LIMSS? If no, how will the Government increase the manpower of the trade?
- 3) What are the details of the outreach social services? Will the engagement of such services be arranged by means of tendering?

Asked by: Hon LAM Cheuk-ting (LegCo internal reference no.: 35)

Reply:

1. Building owners should take primary responsibility for the proper upkeep of their lifts. The policy intent of the Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme (LIMSS) is to provide appropriate support to needy owners to assist them in expediting modernisation of their aged lifts. By modelling on the existing Operation Building Bright 2.0 Scheme and Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme, the rateable value threshold of the LIMSS was set with the aim of providing financial support to the owners of those private residential and composite buildings with relatively low average rateable values to conduct lift modernisation works.

There are currently around 3 700 private buildings eligible for the LIMSS, involving about 13 000 aged lifts. The Government has earmarked in the 2020-21 Budget a sum of \$2 billion for the expansion of the LIMSS, thereby increasing the number of aged lifts to be subsidised from the original 5 000 to 8 000. Relaxing the average rateable value threshold for the LIMSS will only increase the number of eligible buildings, while the

overall number of buildings being subsidised will remain unchanged. We therefore have no plan at this stage to relax the rateable value threshold of the LIMSS. Nevertheless, we will review the effectiveness and coverage of the LIMSS in a timely manner.

2. Currently, there are about 7 900 practitioners in the lift trade. To cope with the expansion of the LIMSS, we estimate that an addition of around 360 general workers will be required by the lift industry in the next six years. Therefore, we have collaborated with the Construction Industry Council to incorporate the lift industry into the Intermediate Tradesman Collaborative Training Scheme currently established for the construction industry with a view to attracting more new blood to the lift industry and hence increasing the manpower to undertake additional lift modernisation works. In the long run, this arrangement will help alleviate the tight manpower supply in the lift industry.
3. The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) is conducting a survey on the demand for outreach social services which will mainly be targeted at the needy residents, such as the elderly and the disabled, living in those subsidised buildings with single lift or with floors served by one lift only. According to the preliminary findings of the survey, stair-climber services and purchase of daily necessities on their behalf are the desirable services for the needy residents. The survey is scheduled to be completed in mid-2020. Subject to the survey results, the URA will work out the details of the outreach social services and the procurement method.

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