

Summary of Responses from the Public to the Public Consultation on the Review of the Restriction on Broadcast of Advertisements for Undertaker and Others Associated with Death or Burial

Proposal to lift the prohibition on advertisements for undertaker and others associated with death or burial, subject to specific conditions on presentation and scheduling as a safeguard to protect the interests of the audience

Support	Not Support	No Views	Total
153 (68%)	40 (18%)	32 (14%)	225

Views that agree to lift the prohibition

- Advertisements for green burial and hospice services for animals are currently broadcast on TV and do not arouse strong objection.
- An open attitude should be adopted to allow the industry to advertise its services and to provide an additional channel for the public to receive the relevant information.
- In an ageing society, the information provided in the advertisements can educate the public about life and death, and facilitate them to have early discussions with family members on funeral arrangements.
- Lifting the prohibition could indirectly enhance the transparency and the mode of the funeral industry.
- Unlike the funeral practices in the past which caused sorrow and fear, funeral services nowadays are modernised and environmental-friendly.
- The relaxation should be in line with the practices adopted in major jurisdictions.

Views that disagree to lift the prohibition

- Despite a gradual change in cultural values, information on such a topic remains a taboo for the Chinese.
- Advertisements for this kind of services might be unnerving and affect the mood of family members, elderly people and patients. Viewers' mood might be affected particularly if such advertisements are broadcast on festive days.
- There are not many funeral service providers in Hong Kong. It is not difficult for the public to find information about the services.

- Operators will pass the advertising costs on to consumers.
- When choosing funeral services, the public usually pay a visit to the service providers or seek assistance from friends.

Views on presentation

- References to death and unnerving content, or inclusion of morbid or horrifying scenes and sound effects should be avoided.
- Any presentation showing disrespect to the deceased, promoting superstition or containing negative messages and tear-jerking plots should be avoided.
- Presentation in the form of still pictures will more likely be accepted by viewers.
- Warnings should be given when the advertisements are broadcast. Only basic information about the services should be provided.
- The scenes presented in the advertisements should make people feel comfortable. The content should be presented in a natural and light-hearted manner with the focus on love and filial piety.
- Restrictions should be imposed on the exposure of dead bodies, coffins, paper figures, etc. in the advertisements.
- The presentation should be discreet and should not be incongruous with the content of the programmes broadcast during the same period.
- It is reasonable to avoid morbid details. However, the requirement that “all explicit references to death and technical aspects of associated services must be avoided” is unnecessary.
- It is only necessary to restrict broadcast of such advertisements to after 11 p.m. The presentation, however, should not be subject to any restriction.

Views on scheduling

- The advertisements should be broadcast at an appropriate time (e.g. from late night to 6 a.m.) to cater for the interest of children and those who do not wish to be exposed to such advertisements. However, there are views that such advertisements should only be broadcast during the daytime.
- The advertisements should not be broadcast during family viewing hours and children’s programme hours so as to avoid children asking questions about what is shown in the advertisements that would bring uneasiness to the elderly.

- The advertisements should not be broadcast during prime time, meal time and festive seasons to avoid causing distress.
- Restriction should be imposed on broadcast frequency (e.g. once every two to three days) and the permitted advertising time should not be too long so as to avoid affecting viewers' mood seriously.

Other views

- Only the advertisements of service operators should be allowed to be broadcast, whereas those of agencies and intermediaries should be prohibited.
- It is envisaged that the number of such advertisements will be modest after the relaxation.
- The relaxation should be implemented in phases (e.g. during the initial stage, such advertisements should only be broadcast outside family viewing hours) with regular reviews and revisions.
- Information relating to funeral ceremonies in hospitals and green burial, as well as their charges may be included in the advertisements.
- Details of services, charges, organisations and contact numbers, etc. should be provided.