

THB approves rehousing assistance applications from XRL
affected villagers

Two households affected by land resumption and clearance under the project of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) collected an ex-gratia cash allowance last week, a spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) said today (February 15).

The rehousing packages exclusively applicable to villagers affected by land resumption and clearance under the XRL project was approved by the Executive Council in October last year. Funding approval was endorsed by the Legislative Council in January. Among the 140 registered households, the government has approved nearly 30 applications and has informed the villagers of the results progressively.

"Villagers, who have been offered the ex-gratia cash allowances, can contact the Rail Development Section of the Lands Department for collection of the allowance," the THB spokesman said.

"The remaining cases will be handled soonest possible. The relevant government departments will continue to take initiatives in visiting the villagers to understand their needs and render assistance to them where appropriate. We also explained the details of the rehousing packages through distribution of the newsletters (see Annex) to the Choi Yuen Tsuen villagers last week."

The package proposed for the Choi Yuen Tsuen villagers affected by the XRL project goes beyond the present compensation and rehousing arrangements under the existing policy and offers various options to meet their different needs.

According to the rehousing package, subject to meeting prescribed eligibility criteria, households with special rehousing needs will be offered an ex-gratia cash allowance of \$600,000, or an allowance of \$500,000 and an opportunity to purchase a flat in the New Territories under the Home Ownership Scheme without being subject to the Comprehensive Means Test.

For farmers who want to continue the agricultural activities, they can buy or rent land to continue with farming activities and apply to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and the Lands Department for short-term waiver on such land to build a temporary structure for residential purpose.

All affected households will be eligible for a domestic removal allowance, ranging from \$3,000 to \$10,000.

The registration deadline has been extended to February 28 to facilitate villagers. The spokesman urged the affected villagers to register with the government as earliest as possible so that relevant departments can proceed with the vetting procedures as soon as possible.

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