

A \$22.7 million budget for district boards

CITY and New Territories administration has proposed a \$22.7 million budget for district boards in the next financial year, it was learned yesterday.

The administration has asked for \$19.2 million for the eight New Territories' boards and \$3.5 million for the 10 urban boards, of which Kuntong is expected to get \$1 million.

The proposed budget with an estimate increase of 58 per cent, will mainly go

to environmental improvement and recreations. The current budget for district boards is about \$13.5 million.

An official source also revealed that 30 per cent eligible voters in the New Territories have registered for district boards' elections.

The source described the figure as "much higher" when compared with turn-outs for Urban Council's election.

The source expected that

there would be two to three candidates contesting each of the 56 seats in the NT district boards.

It was also learned that an Urban Area development progress committee similar to the one in the NT will soon be set up.

It will comprise sub-committee members from the housing department, lands department, the New Territories administration and New Territories services.

Meanwhile, the government hopes to get another 500,000 voters for urban district board election to be held in September.

A massive registration exercise will be launched in March and April throughout the 10 urban districts, deputy regional secretary for City and New Territories administration Mr Albert Lam said last night at a Lions Club dinner meeting. So far 80,000 have

registered to vote at urban district board election.

The registration carried out last year also attracted 194,000 voters for the coming New Territories district board elections to be held on March 4.

Mr Lam said there will be 56 elected seats for the eight district boards in the New Territories and more than 100 people have so far expressed the intention to compete for these seats.