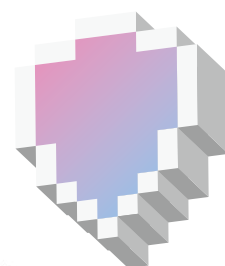


MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

總幹事的話



Ms Gilly WONG Fung-han
黃鳳嫻女士
Chief Executive 總幹事

Major Breakthroughs Despite Pandemic's Headwinds

The past year was marked with continued disruptions to the economy and local businesses as the COVID-19 pandemic entered its second year – yet on the other side of the coin, people became more agile in the new normal. Watching the new economy and marketplace increasingly evolve from offline to online is as exciting as it is challenging for the Council and many local consumers.

Despite these unprecedented challenges, the Council remained focused on its objectives and goals in 2021-22 to protect and empower consumers by disseminating information, organising public education activities, and effectively handling and resolving complaints, as well as working in partnership with key stakeholders such as the Government and the media. The Council also saw a number of breakthroughs and milestones in the year, including the 45th Anniversary of CHOICE Magazine and the launch of a new website, integrated with the eCHOICE platform, making 2021-22 another momentous year in the Council's history.

毋懼疫風 取得重大突破

在過去的年度，2019 冠狀病毒病疫情踏入第 2 年，疫情反覆，繼續重創本港經濟及營商環境，然而，從另一面看，市民大眾學會在新常態下靈活應變。新經濟和市場由線下到線上均有突破性的發展，同時也對消費者委員會和本地消費者帶來另一重挑戰。

儘管面對前所未有的挑戰，本會仍聚焦於 2021-22 年度的目標，透過發放資訊、舉辦公眾教育活動、高效處理和解決投訴，以及與政府和媒體等持份者通力合作，保護和提升消費者自我保護能力。與此同時，本會在這年度取得不少突破，奠下多個里程碑，當中包括《選擇》月刊 45 周年誌慶，以及推出全新官方網站，與《選擇》月刊網站合二為一，令 2021-22 年度成為本會歷史上另一重要的一年。



Information Empowers Consumers

Possibly the most potent tool for enhancing consumer protection is to empower consumers to shop smart through timely dissemination of information about major products and services in the marketplace. As consumers increasingly shop online and gather information from the Internet, the Council's website has become its most important touchpoint with the public. It has therefore become crucial for us to undertake a major makeover of our website, packing it with 4 major new functions and more than 200 free "Shopping Guide" articles covering 9 product categories, to enhance the overall navigation experience.

The new website optimises our online enquiry and complaint services to reinforce consumer safeguards in dispute resolution, supported by a user-friendly e-Form. For CHOICE subscribers, it offers a Product Picker feature to compare easily the ratings and details of each product in specific tests. During the 12 months under review, the Council's website recorded 7.8 million page views, with peaks seen for several popular CHOICE topics, in particular the test report on pre-packaged biscuits in October 2021.

We did not, however, lose sight of the needs of many consumers who still prefer to lay their hands on the physical publication CHOICE, which marked the significant milestone of its 45th year in circulation in 2021.

Circulation of the magazine has now reached over 200,000, up from 40,000 when it was launched in 1976, making it one of the bestselling monthly publications in Hong Kong. We began the celebrations with a special event at the annual Book Fair in July 2021, and invited Olympic gold medallist Guo Jingjing to grace the cover of the November issue. The finale of the celebrations was an online quiz contest in late 2021, giving out a total of 131 CHOICE covers autographed by 12 iconic celebrities or groups to share the joy with readers.

Amongst issues published this year, the top seller covered test results on pre-packaged biscuits, revealing that some were found to contain genotoxic carcinogens. Ranked second and third were the issues about meatballs and cast iron cooking pots respectively, a clear indication that public health remains a primary concern among consumers.

Enriched Media Partnership for Consumer Protection

The well-established Consumer Rights Reporting Awards (CRRRA) which has been successfully held for 21 years underwent a major revamp this year in an effort to keep pace with the new media landscape where social media journalism is fast becoming mainstream. Various enhanced features were added to the CRRRA such as piloting of the social media category, reworked categories, awards structure, judging process, judging criteria and cash prize value. Importantly, public participation in the form of voting was also introduced for 2 categories to raise public awareness on consumer rights.

資訊發放助消費者增強自我保護能力

適時發放市場上主要貨品和服務的資訊，讓消費者知所選擇，作出精明消費，是加強消費者自我保護能力的最有力工具。隨著消費者慣常於網上搜集資訊和購物，本會網站成為了我們與公眾接觸的一個重要渠道，因此，去年其中一項重點工作便是為網站進行一場大革新，透過推出 4 大全新功能，包括提供超過 200 篇涵蓋 9 大產品類別的免費「消費全攻略」文章，全面提升消費者的瀏覽體驗。

新網站提供簡單易用的「網上查詢/投訴表格」，以提升網上查詢及投訴服務效率，進一步保障大眾在遇到消費爭議時的權益。新網站又引入「篩選比較」功能，方便《選擇》月刊的訂戶輕鬆比較在同一測試報告內的产品評分和詳情。在報告年度的 12 個月內，本會網站的瀏覽量高達 780 萬次，多篇《選擇》月刊的主題報告更創下瀏覽高峰，當中人氣最高的是 2021 年 10 月一篇有關預先包裝餅乾的測試報告。

2021 年是《選擇》月刊創刊 45 周年的重要里程碑，作為香港最暢銷的月刊之一，發行量由 1976 年的 4 萬本，攀升至當下每年超過 20 萬本。故此，我們即使喜見網站瀏覽創新高，亦沒有遺忘一直支持印刷版《選擇》月刊的訂戶的需要。

一連串的 45 周年慶祝活動由 2021 年 7 月的書展開始，其後我們亦邀請了「跳水皇后」郭晶晶擔任 11 月號的封面人物，並在年末進行的有獎問答比賽中，送出了 131 幅獲 12 位名人或組合親筆簽名的當期經典封面，與讀者分享創刊 45 周年的喜悅，更為慶祝活動畫上圓滿的句號。

本年度最高銷量的一期為預先包裝餅乾的測試報告，當中揭示部分樣本檢出基因致癌物，緊隨其後分別是有關肉丸和鑄鐵鍋的測試報告，充分反映公眾健康是消費者最關心的議題。

與傳媒並肩倡消費權益

成功舉辦了 21 屆的「消費權益新聞報道獎」（「報道獎」）在今年進行全面革新，以緊貼近年社交平台迅速成為主流傳播媒介，以及傳媒行業變化的步伐。「報道獎」於多項環節獻新猷，例如試行引入社交平台組別，並重整現有參賽組別、獎項設計、評審流程、評分準則和獎項金額等。更重要的是，市民可以透過網上投票，參與其中兩個組別的評分，提升公眾對消費者權益的認知及參與。

Safeguarding the Vulnerable

In the past year, 1,053 complaint cases were filed by consumers aged 65 or above. With the biggest increase in complaints among all age groups during the period – and at 36% compared with a year ago, it was a fairly substantive hike. To further safeguard interests of the ‘silver-haired’, we appointed our first group of senior educators through the Pilot Educator Scheme for Senior Citizens (ESSC) and launched a brand new Elderly Hotline in early 2022. The ESSC is aimed at training senior educators to host community talks for their fellow elderly, sharing the latest consumption-related information with them and also strengthening their support for each other through the social network. The dedicated Elderly Hotline provides a user-friendly service for elderly consumers, encouraging them to seek help, make enquiries or lodge complaints in case of disputes with traders.

Apart from senior citizens, our public education efforts were also directed towards youths and mentally handicapped consumers. The objective is to empower them with the right knowledge to fight against trade malpractices in the marketplace. In collaboration with the Education Bureau, the Council continued to educate young consumers via its flagship programme, the annual Consumer Culture Study Award, which attracted 597 teams, covering over 2,500 students from 77 secondary schools. Another initiative, Earth 2038, which is an experiential learning journey to instil the concept of sustainable consumption to young students, continued receiving enthusiastic support with the participation of over 3,600 students from 32 primary schools in the 2021/22 school year.

The third group of vulnerable consumers are those with special needs. The “Support Programme for Persons with Special Needs” entered its second year in 2021. The programme was designed to empower social work and education practitioners, who would then deliver consumer education workshops for persons with autism spectrum disorder, mild intellectual disability, and common mental disorder, enhancing their self-protection capacity.

守護弱勢社群

本年度來自 65 歲或以上消費者的投訴個案達 1,053 宗，較去年同期增加 36%，升幅顯著，也是所有年齡組別中最大的升幅。為進一步保障銀髮一族的消費權益，本會通過「智齡消費教育大使計劃」培訓了第一批「智齡消費教育大使」，並在 2022 年初推出全新的「智齡消委會熱線」。前者目的是為退休人士和長者提供培訓，裝備他們於社區為長者主持消費權益講座，以及分享最新的消費資訊、加強人際網絡支援；而後者「智齡消委會熱線」則提供長者友善而直接的客戶服務，當遇上消費糾紛時，鼓勵他們尋求協助，作出查詢和投訴。

長者以外，青少年和一般精神障礙人士同樣是我們公眾教育致力服務的對象，相關活動旨在讓他們獲取正確的知識，防範市場上的不良經營手法。多年來，本會持續教育青少年消費者，每年均聯同教育局舉辦旗艦教育活動「消費文化考察報告獎」，今年吸引了來自 77 間中學共 597 隊報名，合共超過 2,500 名學生參加。本會另一教育活動「2038 地球人計劃」，於 2021/22 學年共招募了來自 32 間小學逾 3,600 名學生，透過體驗學習過程，建立同學們「可持續消費」的生活態度。

另一群需要照顧的弱勢消費者是有特殊需要人士。為此而推出的「特殊需要人士支援計劃」已踏入第 2 年，旨在協助前線社會/教育工作者為自閉症譜系障礙消費者、輕度智障消費者，及一般精神障礙消費者舉辦消費者教育工作坊，加強他們的自我保護能力。

Handling Complaints of Diverse Nature Under the New Normal

The emergence of a new economy and the “new normal” way of life under the pandemic has radically changed consumer behaviour. Online purchases of goods and services have grown substantially, not only in volume but in value too, resulting in a growing number of related complaints. In particular, the number of complaints about online clothing and accessory purchases has spiked, as have those related to online food order platforms. Meanwhile, as outbound travel dwindled amid the pandemic, the “staycation” trend continued to flourish, alongside a corresponding surge in complaints.

After a steep increase in complaints at the beginning of the pandemic outbreak in 2020, mainly due to travel restrictions and the shortage of anti-epidemic supplies, the situation in 2021 showed a gentle decline in light of the stabilised supply of anti-epidemic products. In total 29,207 cases were received in the year under review, a slight 2% year-on-year (YoY) increase, but the total value involved was a staggering HK\$1.11 billion, a 62% YoY surge; this was due mainly to the purchase of properties and the closure of a beauty chain. Complaints relating to properties have been consistently on the rise for the past 3 years and the amount involved in the reporting year reached HK\$730 million, a 96% increase from a year ago. Amongst the complaints, the purchase of properties outside Hong Kong was concerning, rising 12% YoY.

As consumers have been spending more time at home during the pandemic, the number of complaints related to electrical appliances soared to a 5-year high, while those involving furniture and fixtures rose by 20%. Food and entertainment services ranked second, while telecommunication services clocked the third-highest number of complaints with 2,224 cases recorded, as more families shifted to working and schooling from home. Looking ahead, the Council needs to pay heed to new consumer complaint trends amidst the new normal.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, apart from updating the dedicated “hub” of the website, we have consistently issued test reports related to combatting the pandemic. Entering the second year of the pandemic in 2021, we remained diligent in conducting tests and surveys on new-fangled anti-epidemic products that had cropped up in the market. Additionally, as more people stay at home, our safety tests on novel kitchen appliances including cast iron pots and air fryers helped safeguard consumers’ health, as did food tests on ham, biscuits and other popular groceries.

在新常態下處理多樣化的投訴

新經濟湧現和疫情下的新常態，對消費模式帶來重大改變。網購和網上服務，不論在銷量和貨值均大幅增長，從而導致相關投訴亦同時急增，特別是關於網上購買衣服和飾物，以及網上外賣點餐平台的投訴。另外，由於外遊受到疫情限制，「宅渡假」的熱潮不斷，有關投訴亦因而上升。

2020年疫情爆發初期，由於旅遊限制和防疫物資短缺，導致投訴個案急劇上升。踏入2021年，防疫產品供應趨向穩定，投訴情況得以輕微改善。本會年內共接獲29,207宗投訴個案，較前一年微升2%，總貨值則高達港幣11.1億元，按年大增62%，主要來自置業和一所連鎖美容院倒閉的投訴。過去3年，關於物業的投訴不斷上升，去年度相關投訴總值達港幣7.3億元，較前一年增長96%。當中，境外置業的投訴按年增加12%，情況令人關注。

疫情肆虐，消費者長時間居家抗疫，增加對電器產品的需求，亦令相關的投訴數字升至5年來新高，同時有關傢俬及裝置的投訴亦增加了2成。接獲投訴最多的第2個類別為食肆及娛樂服務，而由於有更多人在家工作和上課，電訊服務的投訴數字亦緊隨其後，共收到2,224宗投訴。展望將來，本會將會密切注意在新常態下的消費者投訴趨勢。

自疫情爆發，除了更新《齊心抗疫》網上專頁文章，我們更定期發表抗疫有關的測試報告。踏入疫情第2年，我們繼續努力為市面上湧現的新款防疫產品進行測試和調查；加上更多市民在家抗疫，我們加強對新款廚具的安全測試，包括鑄鐵鍋及氣炸鍋，以及對火腿、餅乾和其他食品的測試，致力守護消費者的健康。

Annual Consumer News Voting Reflects Key Public Concerns in 2021

Public voting of the annual Top 10 Consumer News organised by the Council in collaboration with several media organisations continued this year. The results were a good barometer of consumer issues attracting wide public concern. Three of the 10 top stories this year were related to the pandemic, including the closure of a cinema chain, the ongoing disputes resulting from postponed or cancelled wedding banquets, and the demand for foreign domestic helper quarantine facilities far exceeding supply. Another 3 stories that made it to the list were related to newly enacted or proposed bills, including municipal solid waste charging, regulation of disposable plastic tableware, and the ban on electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products. The news story about The Pavilia Farm III, a major real estate project found to be substandard during construction and was required to be demolished and rebuilt ranked third amongst the top 10 while also receiving the highest votes in the “Most Outrageous” news category.

Rising to the Challenge of New Market Trends

In fighting the pandemic alongside Hong Kong people in the past 2 years, the Council has remained steadfast in its mission, striving to reinforce consumer protection with a special focus on safeguarding public health and well-being. We are acutely aware of the need to rise to the challenge from an increasingly digitised society and stay ahead of market trends in order to uphold the best interests of consumers. We have spared no effort in promoting responsible and transparent practices by all merchants, both on- and offline.

Looking ahead, we are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to achieve the Council's strategic objectives and meet the goals set for the coming years, including sustaining our efforts to safeguard the consumer interests of vulnerable groups and the wider public we serve. None of this would be possible without the valued support and advice rendered to the Council by our Members and Chairman, as well as by the multitude of key stakeholders and partners. To all of them we are extremely grateful.



Ms Gilly WONG Fung-han
Chief Executive

2021 年度消費新聞選舉 反映公眾關注議題

由本會主辦的「十大消費新聞選舉」，今年繼續與不同傳媒機構合作籌辦，其投票結果一向是我們了解公眾關注的消費議題的重要指標。今年十大新聞當中有 3 項均與疫情息息相關，包括戲院院線倒閉、疫情以來延期或取消婚宴所引起的爭議，以及外傭檢疫設施嚴重供不應求。另外 3 則新聞則與已通過或擬實施的新法例相關，包括垃圾徵費條例草案、管制即棄膠餐具，以及全面禁售加熱煙電子煙。新樓盤柏傲莊 III 因質量未達標準而需重建的新聞排名第 3 位，此新聞同時獲選為「最離譜」消費新聞。

迎接市場新趨勢帶來的挑戰

過去兩年，本會與港人並肩同心抗疫，堅守使命，致力保障消費權益，尤以保護大眾的健康和福祉為首要任務。與此同時，我們亦緊密監察數碼化社會所帶來的挑戰，整裝待發、作好準備，並緊貼市場脈搏以捍衛消費者的最大權益。本會將繼續不遺餘力在線上線下推廣負責任和具透明度的營商手法。

展望將來，我們對達成本會的策略和來年目標審慎樂觀，包括持續致力保障弱勢社群，以至市民大眾的消費權益。我們衷心感謝本會主席和委員，以及各持份者和合作夥伴，全因為他們的支持及建議，本會才能取得豐碩成果。



黃鳳嫻女士
總幹事

