

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MESSAGE

總幹事的話



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The Consumer Council enjoyed a busy and extremely fruitful year under review, not least because of its golden jubilee milestone and the series of memorable celebrations associated with it, which I had the great pleasure to lead and be personally part of.

The year 2023-24 was our first full reporting year following the lifting of social distancing measures. As the pandemic and associated woes subsided, we were able to redirect our efforts towards consumption issues more closely tied to the livelihoods and daily lives of the public, as well as new ones that have arisen on the journey to post-pandemic and socio-economic recovery. The resumption of normalcy also meant that various longer-term efforts that had stalled during the pandemic, such as some of our legislation and advocacy work, now resumed its pace. The Council's 50th anniversary theme, **"Smart Consumption . Fuelling the Economy"**, proved a precise summary of both our objectives and the outcomes of our work for the year.

### Evolving in Line with Public Needs for Half a Century

For many people, the Consumer Council is more than just a household name. It serves as an "encyclopaedia" for every aspect of daily life — from the little things (in size but not in significance!) such as groceries and daily essentials, to medium-sized purchases such as household appliances, all the way up to major investments such as housing and property. In all these areas, the Council is known for its reliable and in-depth studies, distilled into practical tips to help consumers make smart consumption choices.

Throughout the years, the Council has kept close tabs on the public's concerns by diligently monitoring consumption patterns and trends, then conducting research and studies on a vast range of goods and services in the marketplace. This has resulted in over 4,700 published reports – including product tests, service surveys and consumer rights advocacy work – that address the prevailing consumption needs of different age groups as well as those of vulnerable communities, including senior citizens, young people and people with special needs. These reports have placed consumer rights at the forefront of our priorities.

In the 1970s, for instance, the global oil crisis saw inflation in the prices of many essential daily commodities, yet the quality of these commodities was very variable. One of the Council's first initiatives was its *"Daily Bulletin of Retail Prices of Major Foodstuffs"*, broadcast on the radio every morning from 1974 to 1975, which offered price comparisons for market shoppers. In the early 1980s, when legislation on smoking bans in public areas came into effect, the Council regularly published the test results on the tar and nicotine contents of cigarettes conducted by the Government Chemist. In the early 1990s, the Council brought concerns about the safety of various baby strollers and children's toys to the attention of the authorities and the public through its consumer alerts and test reports. These efforts played a part in the eventual promulgation of the Toys and Children's Products Safety Ordinance in 1992, which represented a new milestone for the safety of children's products.

剛過去的一年，消費者委員會為 50 周年誌慶，籌備了連串精彩活動，工作雖繁忙，但碩果豐盛，令人欣喜；而我能夠領導團隊，見證和落實這個重要里程碑，更加與有榮焉。

2023-24 年是社交距離措施取消後的首個完整報告年度。隨着疫情和其陰霾消退，我們的工作重點重回與市民大眾日常生活息息相關的消費議題，以及在「後疫情」時代社會經濟復蘇過程中浮現的新議題上。社會復常意味著各項因疫情而停頓的長線工作，例如法例相關及倡議工作等，可重拾步伐。消委會以「**精明消費 燃亮經濟**」為 50 周年主題，正好準確概括年內的工作目標和成果。

### 半世紀以來隨大眾需求蛻變

對許多人來說，「消費者委員會」這個名字不僅家喻戶曉，更是一本涵蓋日常生活方方面面的「百科全書」。由細至柴米油鹽醬醋茶等日常必需品、到中度花費的家庭電器、以至重大的置業問題，事無大小，都一一涵蓋；消委會的研究一向亦以可靠見稱，從中整理出的實用消費貼士更協助消費者作出精明選擇。

多年來，本會一直密切監察消費模式和趨勢，以掌握公眾關心的議題，從而對市面上各式各樣的商品和服務進行調查與研究。本會過去共發表超過 4,700 份報告，涵蓋產品測試、服務調查及消費者權益倡議。這些報告以消費者權益為前提，針對不同年齡群組以至弱勢社群的消費需要，包括長者、年輕人及特殊需要人士。

70 年代，石油危機引發高通脹，導致日用品價格高企，品質卻良莠不齊。本會成立初期的首項措施便是發表《主要食品零售價格行情報告》，於 1974 至 1975 年間，每天早上在電台廣播，為消費者提供價格情報。80 年代初，公眾地方禁煙的法例正式生效，本會定期發表由政府化驗所測試焦油及尼古丁含量的香煙測試報告。90 年代初，本會多項有關嬰兒車及兒童玩具安全的消費警示及測試報告，引起當局及公眾關注，有助促使當局於 1992 年頒布《玩具及兒童產品安全條例》，為兒童產品安全立下里程碑。





During the SARS outbreak in the early 2000s, the Council conducted a series of research activities and surveys on surgical face masks, sanitation and disinfectant products, and supplies claiming protective efficacy against SARS. It was even more active when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020. Then, the Council launched a dedicated one-stop webpage that provided consumers with free, timely and reliable anti-epidemic information, produced a video on how to make an effective DIY face mask when market supplies were scarce, conducted tests on virus-prevention products, and later developed and launched search tools for rapid antigen test kits and for medicine containing paracetamol. In short, we addressed consumers' most pressing concerns at every stage of the anti-epidemic journey.

In the current reporting year we have surveyed a number of trending services and goods, including online food ordering platforms and probiotics products, as well as areas linked with sustainable consumption and waste reduction such as greenwashing activities, grocery bags in online shopping, online second-hand sales platforms, green mortgage plans and ESG investment.

With tourism regathering momentum in the year, various travel-related products and services also came under our radar. These included suitcases, airline compensation for mishandled baggage, travel insurance, overseas wedding photo services, complaints against air ticket bookings, and the "Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles" scheme. Overall, our efforts were geared towards addressing the most current consumer needs and trends on the one hand, while at the same time maintaining our ongoing market surveillance of the goods and services that are indispensable to everyday life.

## Evolution of Information Dissemination Channels

Of course, we cannot talk about test reports and surveys without mentioning the iconic CHOICE Magazine. CHOICE has always been one of our key information dissemination touchpoints with the public, and through it we have created many collective memories for almost 50 years now. In that period, not only have the research topics covered in CHOICE moved with the times and trends, but the magazine's format has also changed in line with the public's changing media consumption habits.

The inaugural issue of CHOICE, featuring a product test on cooking oils, appeared in 1976 at a cover price of HK\$1. The magazine had its first major revamp in the 1980s, immortalised by its most iconic cover ever, featuring superstar Leslie Cheung. CHOICE Magazine's all-time best-seller was its August 1988 issue, which included a groundbreaking product test on condoms. This issue flew off the shelves and was reprinted several times, ultimately recording a since-unsurpassed historical high circulation figure of 73,000 copies.

千禧年代初的一場沙士，令到人心惶惶，本會當時曾就口罩、清潔及消毒用品，以及聲稱具有預防沙士功效的產品，進行了一系列的研究和調查。2020年新冠疫情肆虐期間，本會反應更積極迅速，開設一站式網站為消費者提供及時而可靠的免費防疫資訊，並於口罩供應短缺時，推出自製口罩教學短片，以及測試其他防疫產品，及後更分別推出快速抗原測試包及撲熱息痛製劑的搜尋器。總括而言，在抗疫路上的每個階段，我們均切實應對消費者當前最關注的議題。

過去一年，本會亦與時並進，調查了一系列新興的產品與服務，包括網上點餐平台及益生菌產品；亦於可持續消費與減廢範疇方面，進行涵蓋漂綠、網購派發購物袋、二手網購平台、綠色按揭，及環境、社會和企業管治（ESG）投資的調查。

隨着旅遊業於年內復蘇，我們亦加強關注與旅遊相關的產品及服務，包括行李唛耐用度、行李事故賠償安排、旅行保險、海外婚紗攝影服務、機票預訂投訴及「港車北上」等。總括而言，我們一方面努力應對當前最流行的消費需求和趨勢，同時繼續對日常生活不可或缺的產品和服務進行持續的市場監察。

## 資訊發放渠道與時並進

談到測試報告和調查，當然不得不提《選擇》月刊。作為消委會一直以來向公眾傳播資訊的其中一個主要渠道，《選擇》月刊在過去差不多50年間，既創造了許多集體回憶，同時亦做到與時並進，除了當中的研究題目能緊貼市場需要外，月刊的刊載形式，亦緊隨着大眾使用媒體的習慣而作相應改變。

1976年《選擇》月刊創刊號，以食油產品測試為主題，售價為港幣一元。80年代，《選擇》月刊首次革新，最經典的封面人物必定是巨星張國榮；而以劃時代的安全套測試為封面的1988年8月號，是歷來最暢銷的一期，一推出便火速售罄並要多次加印，創下歷史性的73,000冊的最高銷售量，紀錄保持至今。



A shift towards digitalisation started at the turn of the century with the introduction of the online version of CHOICE ("eCHOICE") in 2004. In 2021, we launched a new website that integrated eCHOICE with the Council's official website, as part of our response to the changing media consumption habits of consumers. Since then, we have embraced various social media and e-communication channels to meet popular demand, including Facebook in 2016, YouTube in 2018, WeChat in 2022, and Instagram in early 2024. To date, the website has accumulated 13 million total page views, while our YouTube channel has garnered 4.7 million views.

While on the topic of digital transformation, we were honoured that CHOICE received two prestigious accolades at the 8th Media Convergence Awards organised by the Hong Kong Association of Interactive Marketing during the year. In recognition of its efforts in utilising technology to disseminate news and information, it won a Gold Award in the "Magazines (ESG)" category and a Bronze Award in the "Magazines (Social Media)" category.

Our efforts to disseminate information effectively also owe a huge debt to the ongoing support of the mass media, with the Council recording over 5,400 cases of relevant media coverage during the year. Through the annual Consumer Rights Reporting Awards (CRRRA), we celebrate and recognise outstanding journalism in the reporting of consumer-related issues. For the 23rd CRRRA in the year under review, we received a record-breaking 373 entries from 42 news organisations, social media platforms and educational institutions, including 10 first-timers. Since its launch in 2001, the CRRRA has received a total of 4,510 entries, a figure which reflects the pivotal role of the media in raising public awareness of consumption topics.

## Resolving Consumer Disputes

Complaint trends and figures have always been accurate and important indicators of the most critical consumer concerns and current affairs issues. As COVID-19 reached its tail-end and pandemic-related issues subsided, we saw a clear shift towards other key consumer concerns. With the city once again beginning to buzz with life, entertainment and travelling became the categories that attracted the most complaints. Inevitably, accelerating inbound and outbound tourism and the business of "fuelling the economy" brought with them a rise in consumer disputes.

At the top of the list were complaints related to food and entertainment services: they recorded a staggering 76% year-on-year increase, with 5,648 cases in the year under review. "Travel matters" was the third highest complaint category with 2,673 cases, although this did represent a 20% decline compared to the previous year.

甫踏入新世紀，《選擇》月刊亦步向數碼化，於 2004 年推出網上版；其後《選擇》月刊網站亦於 2021 年，與消委會官方網站合二為一，以滿足消費者不斷變化的媒體使用習慣。隨後我們亦陸續進駐不同社交媒體及網上資訊平台，包括 2016 年開設的 Facebook 專頁、2018 年的 YouTube 頻道、2022 年的微信公眾號，及今年初剛推出的 Instagram 帳號。迄今為止，官方網頁的瀏覽量累計達 1,300 萬，而 YouTube 頻道的瀏覽次數則達 470 萬。

成功數碼化轉型的《選擇》月刊，今年在香港互動市務商會主辦的第八屆「傳媒轉型大獎」榮獲兩項殊榮，分別在雜誌類別（ESG）榮獲金獎及雜誌類別（社交媒體）榮獲銅獎，表揚《選擇》月刊有效地運用科技傳遞新聞和資訊的努力。

本會得以有效地傳播資訊，當然還有賴傳媒的鼎力支持。過去一年，有關消委會的媒體報道超過 5,400 則。我們每年均透過消費權益新聞報道獎（「報道獎」），表揚過去一年有關消費議題的出色新聞報道。第 23 屆「報道獎」共收到來自 42 家新聞機構、社交平台及大專院校所提交的 373 份參賽作品，數量破紀錄之餘，更吸引了 10 家媒體首次參與。自 2001 年首次舉辦以來，「報道獎」共收到 4,510 份參賽作品，反映媒體在提高公眾對消費議題關注所扮演的重要角色。

## 調停消費者糾紛

消費投訴趨勢和數字，向來都是反映消費者當前最貼身和關注議題的準確及重要指標。隨著疫情消退，消費者的焦點亦明顯由疫情轉移到其他消費題目上。當消費開始活躍，娛樂及旅遊相關類別亦引來了最多投訴；出入境旅遊復蘇及最先能「燃亮經濟」的相關行業提速，消費糾紛無可避免地有所增加，情況可以理解。

「食肆及娛樂」類別的投訴於本年度位列榜首，按年增長 76%，達到 5,648 宗。「旅遊事務」的投訴雖然按年下跌 20%，仍然位列投訴榜第三名，共 2,673 宗。



Mega events kick-started the city's efforts to rejuvenate the economy and travel industry, while air travel also picked up in the year. These developments led to two incidents that triggered great public concern, namely the cancellation of many Cathay Pacific flights during the peak travel season, and football star Lionel Messi's controversial non-appearance at the "Tatler XFEST: Hong Kong Team vs. Inter Miami CF" exhibition match in February 2024. Responding to a flurry of media enquiries on the first of these issues in press statements and interviews, the Council urged the airline to ensure it maintained adequate manpower and had contingency measures in place to avoid upsetting consumers' holiday plans, especially during peak seasons. In response to the latter issue, which generated around 1,500 complaints, the Council took proactive steps to conciliate all parties and address public concerns. In addition to issuing several media statements, the Council liaised closely with the event organiser to identify potential solutions, and ultimately helped ensure a smooth 50% refund was offered by the organiser to allay ticket holders' dissatisfaction.

## Tackling Trade Malpractices Against Tourists

Over the past five decades, the Council has "named and shamed" a total of 120 traders for unfair trade practices, such as misleading or high-pressure sales tactics. Those named have included fitness centres, beauty centres, pharmacies and timeshare companies, among others. Naming is not carried out lightly. It only occurs after careful consideration and a great deal of research, involving traders who have committed serious and repeated transgressions.

During the reporting year, the Council publicly named and reprimanded four Chinese pharmacies in a prime tourist district for unscrupulous trade practices involving "catty-to-tael" scams and "ingredient-grinding" strong-arm tactics, which were detrimental to consumer rights. By continuing these malpractices despite the Council's repeated conciliation efforts in response to complaints, the four pharmacies were severely jeopardising Hong Kong's reputation, especially at a time when the retail industry was recovering in the wake of the pandemic. The Council took this action to convey a strong message of intolerance to the "bad apples" of the industry. The move also reflected the rise in complaints received in 2023-24 about unscrupulous sales practices targeting tourists.

## Empowering the Next Generation of Consumers

To educate is to empower. The Council's longstanding commitment to consumer education was worked out in its earlier days through community activities in conjunction with the dissemination of information in print publications and through the mass media. Its first consumer education teaching kit created with the Education Department in the late 1970s was widely adopted by schools. In 1980, the Council organised its first Consumer Education Seminar in partnership with the International Organisation of Consumers Unions (IOCU) (the predecessor of Consumers International), attended by delegates from over 20 countries and regions.

全球航空旅遊復常，一連串的盛事成為振興經濟和旅遊業的頭炮，同時亦衍生了兩件備受公眾關注的事件，包括國泰航空於旅遊旺季取消多班航班，以及球星美斯於今年2月舉行的「Tatler XFEST 嘉年華：香港隊對國際邁阿密 CF 足球友誼賽」缺陣。在國泰事件上，傳媒查詢蜂擁而至，本會透過聲明及訪問，敦促航空公司於旺季期間應確保有足夠人手及應變措施，以免打亂消費者、特別是在旺季的旅遊計劃。至於美斯缺陣，本會接獲約1,500宗投訴，並主動積極跟進，協調各方解決問題。除數次發出聲明外，本會亦跟主辦單位密切聯繫商議，尋求可行的解決方案，最終主辦單位提出退款50%以安撫球迷對活動安排的不滿。

## 打擊針對旅客的不良營商手法

過去50年，本會點名譴責了120間商戶的不良營商手法，例如具誤導性或高壓銷售伎倆等。被點名的商戶包括健身中心、美容院、藥店及「時光共享」公司。點名決定從不輕率，要經過深入調查，證實商戶屢次嚴重違規，和慎重考慮後，才會決定公開譴責。

年內，本會公開點名譴責4間位於遊客區的藥店，涉及「斤變兩」及將藥材磨粉等不良營商手法，損害消費者權益。本會曾經試圖調停，惟4間藥店卻繼續以不良手法經營，在零售業疫後復蘇之際，對香港聲譽的損害尤其嚴重。本會於2023-24年度接獲針對旅客的不良營商手法投訴有所上升，期望透過點名譴責行動，向業界的害群之馬發出強烈警示以遏止歪風。

## 提升新一代消費者的自我保護能力

本會多年來堅持透過教育賦權消費者，早期便已利用社區活動、出版刊物及大眾媒體傳播資訊。1977年，本會與教育司署合作推出首套消費者教育教材，被學校廣泛採用。1980年，本會與國際消費者聯合協會（國際消費者聯會前身）合辦首個消費者教育研討會，吸引來自20多個國家和地區的代表參加。





Since the setting up of a dedicated division for programme expansion in 1998, the Council has made huge progress in consumer education both in terms of diversifying the target groups reached and adopting new technologies to enrich programme content. Following the introduction of the Consumer Culture Study Award (CCSA) in 1999, our programmes have branched out to embrace various specific consumer groups. They have included "Earth 2038's Learning Journey of Sustainable Consumption" developed for primary schools in 2017, the "Support Programme for Persons with Special Needs" in 2020, and the "Educator Scheme for Senior Citizens" in 2021. In early 2023, we piloted a groundbreaking virtual reality (VR) initiative for the second of these target groups, leveraging immersive technology to create role-play simulations of two sales malpractice scenarios.

Another significant milestone was reached in the year under review with the inauguration of the Smart Consumption Academy (SCA) programme for secondary school students, developed in collaboration with the Education Bureau. Succeeding the 24-year-old CCSA, the new SCA is designed to keep pace with rapid technological advances and evolving education modes. It aims at nurturing a new generation of smart consumers by providing them with crucial knowledge relating to topics such as rational consumption, sustainable consumption, and caring for the community.

## Another 50 Years of Consumer Protection

We have come a long way since 1974, and I am excited to be embarking on our next chapter of consumer protection, which will be increasingly fuelled by AI-enabled solutions and innovative strategies in today's world of digital transformation. The free distribution of CHOICE Magazine in January 2025 marks a new era in information dissemination, as we take consumer empowerment to the next level by providing more accessible information and more interactive communication channels.

I wish to take the opportunity of this momentous 50-year anniversary to express my sincerest gratitude to all our Chairmen and Council Members, both past and present, for their guidance, to our stakeholders for their support, and to Council staff for their concerted efforts in powering this half-century vessel in its voyage to consumer protection, both in the decades past and the years ahead.

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為開拓更多教育項目，本會於 1998 年成立專責部門，自此在消費者教育方面取得了重大進展，包括服務更多不同對象，以及應用新科技豐富活動內容。自 1999 年推出「消費文化考察報告獎」（「報告獎」）後，我們將消費者教育推展到不同的消費群體，包括 2017 年為小學生而設的「2038 地球人計劃之可持續消費旅程」、2020 年的「特殊需要人士支援計劃」及 2021 年的「智齡消費教育大使」。2023 年初，我們更為特殊需要人士推出突破性的虛擬實境（VR）體驗，讓他們沉浸式經歷及應對兩種不良銷售情境。

本年度，另一個重要的里程碑為與教育局攜手推出的全新中學生消費者教育活動——以「智醒消費學堂」承接跨越 24 載的「報告獎」。科技發展一日千里，中學生的學習模式亦與以往截然不同，「智醒消費學堂」與時並進，透過向新一代灌輸理性消費、可持續消費和關懷社區等重要知識，培育他們成為精明消費者。

## 未來 50 年堅守使命 保障消費者權益

消委會自 1974 年成立以來，與市民一起相扶相持，走過高山低谷。踏入數碼化轉型的時代，我深感雀躍，因為消委會在人工智能和創新科技的協助下，必能承先啟後，開拓保障消費者權益的新篇章。同時《選擇》月刊亦將於 2025 年 1 月起讓公眾免費閱覽，標誌着嶄新的資訊傳播時代正式展開。消費者將可透過更暢通無阻及更互動的溝通渠道獲取資訊，有助進一步提升自我保護能力。

藉著金禧年之際，我謹向前任和現任主席及委員致以最誠摯的謝意，感謝他們的指導，亦感謝各持份者的支持，以及全體職員上下一心，在過去的數十年和未來，齊齊乘風破浪，同心協力保障消費者權益。

