



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

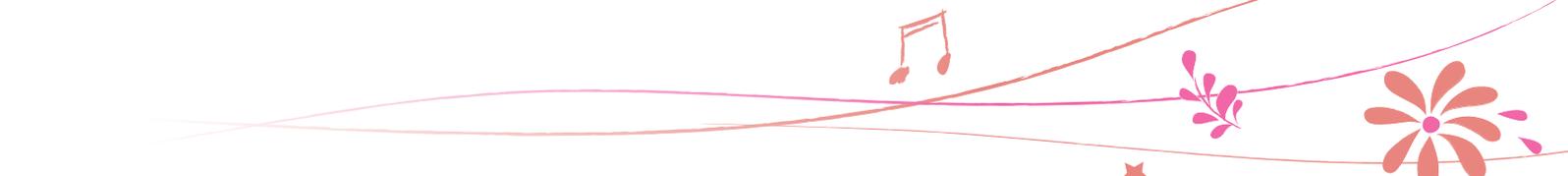
總幹事的話

Ms Gilly WONG Fung-han
黃鳳嫻女士

Chief Executive 總幹事

A 2020-21 review of our work at the Consumer Council must inevitably be clouded by the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our fiscal year saw the Government introducing a series of stringent measures to contain the spread of the virus, but ultimately the repercussions have become much more deep-rooted: the most notable change has been a **major shift of consumer behaviour** from direct to online purchases, and from dining out to eating in. This in turn has resulted in a **surge in the volume of issues and complaints** filed with the Council at a time when many of our staff had to work from home, posing unprecedented challenges to our resources and organisational effectiveness.

回顧 2020-21 年度消費者委員會的工作，無可避免都是與 2019 冠狀病毒病疫情有關。政府在年內引入一系列嚴謹的措施，防止疫情擴散，而這些措施最終亦為社會帶來深遠的影響。其中最顯著的轉變是**消費行為**，消費者從光顧實體店舖轉為到網上選購；從外出用膳變為在家煮食。這些轉變亦**衍生大量消費爭議及投訴**，為疫情下需在家工作的本會人員，在資源和工作效率上帶來前所未有的挑戰。



Despite these challenges, I am happy to report that the Council was able to keep its focus on the most urgent needs of local consumers while striving to maintain all of its regular services, thanks to the unrelenting efforts of our staff and their agility and adaptiveness, which are traits common to Hong Kong as a whole. During the year under review, the Council managed to provide timely and comprehensive pricing information, as well as tests and research findings on foodstuffs, daily necessities and a host of anti-pandemic products to cater for the “stay-at-home” mode of living. At the same time, we never lost sight of our longer-term goals, including advocacy for sustainable living and consumer education for our youths, the elderly and the underprivileged.

Addressing Surge in Complaints and New Issues with Agile Actions

The COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to new consumer issues while amplifying many longer-standing ones. With consumers shunning physical shopping and moving en masse to online purchases, many traders — even including major supermarkets — have had difficulties coping with the huge increase in traffic and logistical demands. Delivery delays or blatant online sales scams have been amongst the most common consumer complaints, resulting in a total of 28,590 complaints during the year under review, a year-on-year increase of 8%. As might be expected, close to half of the complaints were attributable to online shopping.

The Council responded by publishing various articles in CHOICE Magazine related to the prevention of online consumer traps and shopping scams. These included a survey on the service quality of online supermarkets; alerts on anti-epidemic product scams circulating on social media; and reports on complaints and risks related to the latest live-streaming e-commerce trend — all designed to empower consumers to continue “shopping smart”. For those who had already fallen victim to unscrupulous traders, the Council continued to provide advice and conciliation support on disputes.

The Council also moved swiftly to address other suddenly arisen consumer issues during the year. Most notable were the many cancellations and rebookings of wedding banquets, travel plans, airline tickets and the like, as well as a wide variety of entertainment; the rapidly-changing regulations left consumers frustrated and out in the cold as to how and whether refunds could be arranged.

Timely Research and Dissemination of Information

The Council has also been extremely concerned about the quality of pandemic-related products as many were rushed to the market by manufacturers and importers. At the early stage of the pandemic in 2020, as demand for face masks far outstripped supply, consumers not only had to scramble in the market for masks but the price also quickly reached unreasonable levels as if they were luxury items. Thinking out of the box, the Council collaborated with a number of institutions to come up with a DIY solution for consumers to make face masks using common household products.

In parallel, we also conducted tests on various anti-epidemic products and published the results at a very early stage of the pandemic and continued this work throughout the year, covering both conventional and novel products cropping up in the market such as disinfectant cards and badges, wearable negative ion air purifiers and multi-purpose disinfectants. In

儘管如此，本會始終堅守崗位，竭力協助本地消費者解決燃眉之急，並致力維持一切日常服務的運作，這全賴本會同仁，秉承着香港人努力不懈、靈活變通，和強大適應力的特質。在本年度，本會適時向消費者提供全面的市場價格資訊，以及各種測試和調查結果，涵蓋食品、日用品，以及各類型防疫用品，方便市民在「宅在家」的新常態下生活如常。與此同時，我們仍不忘推動一些較長遠的目標，包括提倡可持續生活，以及向我們的年青人、長者和弱勢社群灌輸消費者教育。

靈活應對大量湧現的消費者投訴和新議題

2019 冠狀病毒病疫情不但帶來新的消費問題，同時亦突顯很多由來已久的消費爭議。當消費者避免到實體店購物，並一窩蜂轉移到網上購物時，不少商戶，甚至包括大型連鎖超市，亦難以應付突如其來激增的網絡流量和物流需求。送貨延誤，甚或明目張膽的網上銷售詐騙，成為云云消費投訴中最常見的個案。本會在年度內共接獲 28,590 宗投訴，按年增加 8%；並一如所料，接近一半的投訴來自網購。

有見及此，本會在《選擇》月刊發表多篇文章，提醒消費者避免墮入網上消費陷阱和騙局。這些文章包括超市網購的服務質素調查、警示消費者小心社交媒體上流傳販賣防疫用品的騙局，以及有關網上直播帶貨等新趨勢 — 這一切都是為加強消費者自我保護能力，令大家繼續「精明消費」。對於那些已墮入不良商戶消費陷阱的苦主，本會則繼續致力提供建議和調停相關投訴。

本會年內亦迅速應對其他冒起的消費者議題。當中令人關注的，莫過於疫情下湧現大量婚宴酒筵、旅遊計劃、機票預訂被取消或改期，以及各式各樣娛樂消費爭議。面對經常修訂的服務條款，消費者感到既沮喪又無助，不知能否成功安排退款。

適時發放消費調查和資訊

疫情下大量抗疫相關產品經生產商和入口商湧進本地市場，本會高度關注這些產品的質素。在 2020 年疫情初期，大眾對口罩的需求遠高於供應，消費者不但要在市場上搶購口罩，相關用品的價錢更飆升至近乎奢侈品的不合理水平。為解消費者的燃眉之急，本會遂與多個機構攜手合作，突破傳統思維，研究以日常家庭用品自製口罩。

與此同時，本會早在疫情最初階段已測試並公布各種防疫用品的檢測結果，相關工作亦於年內繼續進行，同時涵蓋傳統和突然冒起的防疫用品，例如除菌掛卡掛章、隨身負離子空氣淨化機，和



short, not only did we have to be vigilant about the ever-changing market trends, there was also a need to stay ahead of the curve so as to carry out the necessary research and provide consumers with prompt and objective information. In this regard, the gathering of information is just as important as distributing it: in order to provide consumers with a user-friendly resource, the Council set up a one-stop “Together, We Fight COVID-19” webpage in early 2020 and consistently updated it in subsequent months. The webpage consolidated relevant pandemic information, including free downloads of test results on face masks and other related products.

Business as Usual; Helping the Vulnerable

Despite the sporadic disruptions to our work due to the pandemic, our monthly press conferences were staged by live-streaming throughout the year, while our signature monthly CHOICE Magazine was delivered well on schedule. No fewer than 56 reports on various product tests, surveys and research were released. Consumer education also continued unabated, as this is one of the mainstays of our annual work plan.

One important objective of the Council is to help consumers who have special needs and prevent them from being abused by aggressive salespeople, especially in the fitness and beauty trades. This year, the Council launched a brand new “Support Programme for Persons with Special Needs”, aimed at strengthening the self-protection capacity of the mentally handicapped. The programme provides training kits and case study videos featuring unscrupulous sales tactics to help social workers and teachers educate those with autism spectrum disorder, mild intellectual disability and common mental disorder.

Besides education, the Council proactively provides assistance to victims of trade malpractices from these 2 industries. The fundamental solution is to introduce a mandatory cooling-off period, a measure the Council has advocated since 2018. Unfortunately, the sudden change in economic situation due to social unrest and COVID-19 have stalled the progress of this legislation. The Council maintains its hope that once economic activities resume, the legislative procedures can recommence to ensure much stronger protection for the vulnerable in the long run.

Price Trends in Motor Fuels and Essential Daily Commodities

Consumers are particularly price sensitive in times of economic depression. Despite crude oil prices hitting a historical trough in April 2020 and falling to negative value, motor fuel prices in Hong Kong remained firm during the year. The Council launched a new “Oil Price Watch” website and mobile app with enhanced functions in November 2020, offering car owners and drivers in Hong Kong a more user-friendly, informative and content-rich platform for checking the actual retail prices offered by different oil companies after discount.

Apart from fuel prices, price surges in daily necessities also affected everyone directly. Our *2019 Annual Supermarket Price Survey* released in April 2020, at the height of the pandemic, marked yet another year of our ongoing efforts to champion information transparency and empower consumers in their choices. The survey found that 8 out of 12 categories recorded an upward trend in price, with packaged rice leading the price surge at an average increase of 8.5%. Deeply concerned that the significant rise would place extra burden on consumers’ daily expenses in the midst of the economic downturn, the Council urged rice importers and retailers to stabilise their supply and impose tight control on price adjustments.

用途消毒噴劑。簡而言之，本會不但對瞬息萬變的市場時刻保持警惕，更需早著先鞭進行有需要的研究，為消費者提供及時和客觀的資訊。鑑於搜集和發放資訊同樣重要，為了令消費者易於獲取和使用相關資訊，本會早在 2020 年初於官方網站內開設一站式「齊心抗疫」專頁，隨後亦持續更新網頁內容，為消費者整合各種防疫資訊，包括提供口罩和相關防疫產品的測試結果，供免費下載。

一切如常；為弱勢社群伸出援手

儘管疫情不時打岔本會的工作，但《選擇》月刊仍風雨不改依時出版，每月的記者會則移師到網上串流直播，定期舉行。年內公布了不少於 56 篇報告，包括各種產品測試、調查和研究報告等。此外，作為本會每年核心工作計劃之一的消費者教育，年內亦從不間斷。

本會其中一項重要的目標是幫助有特殊需要的消費者，防止他們被來勢洶洶的銷售員，特別是健身和美容業界的害群之馬，以高壓手段強迫消費。本會年內開展全新的「特殊需要人士支援計劃」，旨在提升特殊需要人士的自我保護能力。相關計劃提供訓練教材套，以及剖析不良銷售手法的案件重演短片，幫助社工和教師，有效支援自閉症譜系障礙、輕度智障，以及一般精神障礙的消費者。

除透過教育外，本會亦積極向受上述兩個行業的不良銷售手法影響的苦主提供協助。然而，治本之道是引入強制性冷靜期，這是本會自 2018 年以來一直倡議推動的政策，可惜不幸地受社會事件和疫情所帶來的經濟狀況轉變影響，相關政策的立法進程停滯不前。本會期望，一旦經濟活動回復正常，相關立法程序能得以重啟，長遠為弱勢社群提供更堅實的保護。

車用燃油和主要日常用品的價格趨勢

消費者在經濟不景的時候，對價格變動尤其敏感。儘管原油價格在 2020 年 4 月跌至負數的歷史性新低，年內本港的車用燃油價格仍然高踞不下。本會在 2020 年 11 月推出全新「油價資訊通」網站及手機應用程式，具備多項優化功能，提供更方便易用、資訊更詳盡、內容更豐富的網上平台，有助一眾車主和司機比較不同油公司在計算折扣後提供的實際零售價。

除燃油價格，日用品價格飆升對所有人的生活都帶來直接影響。本會的 2019 年度超市價格調查在 2020 年 4 月公布，當時正值疫情高峰期，標誌著我們貫徹始終，年復年提倡增加資訊透明度，為消費者提供知情的選擇。相關調查發現 12 大類超市貨品中，有 8 類價格錄得上升趨勢，當中以「食米」



With the “stay-at-home” economy becoming the new normal, we closely monitored price fluctuations in domestic daily commodities such as rice, oil and groceries based on the data from “Online Price Watch” throughout the year. While the average price increase of these daily essentials over the past year was more or less in line with the Consumer Price Index, some goods such as rice and canned meat, which had become the subject of panic buying at the onset of the pandemic, saw sharp price rises in the first quarter of 2020, retreating only in the fourth quarter.

In the same vein but with much longer-term implications, we were keen to investigate how the units of measurement of supermarket groceries impacted, or impeded, consumers in making fair price comparisons and ultimately making best value-for-money decisions. The Council published a unit pricing survey in March 2021, bringing to light the drastic inconsistency in the unit prices of grocery products. For instance, the unit price of different flavours of the same product/brand could vary up to 80% owing to different net weights or volumes. Further fuelling confusion were the different measurement units used by supermarkets, making it hard for consumers to compare prices directly. In view of this, the Council recommended that supermarkets reference related regulations and experience from overseas jurisdictions such as Australia, and indicate the unit price of products in addition to their marked price.

Looking Back and Ahead

Looking back at 2020, the Consumer Council has witnessed drastic changes in market dynamics, which has presented enormous challenges to the Council in its role as the watchdog of the new economy. Despite the tough times and much hardship, the Council maintained its diligence in monitoring latest developments in the coronavirus pandemic as well as consumer news in the marketplace. To this, we owe our heartfelt thanks to all staff members of the Council for staying agile and vigilant throughout the pandemic, making “business as usual” possible.

In anticipation of the control of the pandemic as vaccinations start picking up momentum worldwide, there remains much speculation as to the prospect of economic recovery in 2021-22. Travel corridors; the reopening of borders and gradual resumption of international travel; the recovery of individual and business activities; and local and global commerce will all be factored into how the pandemic recovery journey pans out. While this unpredictable road to recuperation may come with new challenges and consumer issues, the Council will closely observe the development of relevant industries and provide consumers with timely cautionary advice to safeguard consumer rights.

Finally, I am most grateful to Members of the Council for their stalwart trust, and the leadership of our Chairman who has continued to be the Council’s beacon of inspiration in uncertain times.



Ms Gilly WONG Fung-han
Chief Executive

的價格升幅最高，總平均售價增加達 8.5%。本會高度關注食米價格顯著上升，在經濟下行時期會為消費者的日常開支帶來沉重負擔，故促請大米進口商和零售商維持穩定供應，並嚴加控制價格調整。

有見於「宅經濟」成為新常態，我們透過「網上價格一覽通」的數據密切監察本地日常用品的價格變動，例如大米、食油和雜貨。在過去幾年，日用品的平均價格增幅大致與消費物價指數看齊，然而一些貨品，例如食米和罐頭肉，在疫情爆發初期成為市民恐慌性搶購的對象，導致其價格在 2020 年首季出現大幅上升，至同年第四季才有所回落。

為令格價工作更具長遠意義，本會積極進行超市雜貨的計量單位調查，了解其如何影響或妨礙消費者作出公平價格比較，以致最終作出最物有所值的消費決定。本會在 2021 年 3 月公布貨品單價調查結果，揭示雜貨貨品採取極不一致的單件計價手法。如同產品/品牌，但不同口味的貨品，由於不同淨重或體積，其單價相差可高達 80%。更令消費者感到混亂的是，不同超市採用的計量單位五花八門，令消費者難以直接比較價錢。有見及此，本會倡議各超市參考海外不同司法管轄區的相關條例和經驗，例如澳洲會在標示售價的同時，顯示其產品的單價。

回顧與前瞻

回顧 2020 年，本會在新經濟下的監察角色亦因市場動態出現劇變，變得更為艱難。儘管面對艱難時刻和重重困難，本會亦竭盡所能，緊貼疫情動態和消費者關注的消息。為此，我們衷心感謝消委會同仁在疫情期間時刻保持靈活和警惕，致力在疫情下繼續如常運作。

展望未來，雖然疫情隨着全球注射疫苗人數日益增加而有望受控，然而各界對 2021-22 年經濟復甦仍抱觀望態度。旅遊走廊、重新通關及漸次回復的國際旅遊、重啟個人和商業活動，以及本地和國際商貿，凡此種種均影響疫後復甦之路會否光明。在這難以預測的一年會充滿各種新挑戰和消費者議題，本會將密切觀察相關業界的發展，並適時提供警示忠告，以守護消費者的權益。

最後，我衷心感謝本會委員的信任，以及主席的領導，在這充滿變數的日子裡，繼續啟迪和指引消委會前行。



黃鳳嫻女士
總幹事

MANAGEMENT TEAM OF THE CONSUMER COUNCIL

消費者委員會管理層 (2020.04.01 – 2021.03.31)

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
總幹事



Ms Gilly WONG Fung-han
黃鳳嫻女士

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
副總幹事



Mr Eddy TONG Chi-chung
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黃佩珊女士
(from 2020.11.02 起)



Principal Complaints & Advice Officer
Mr Francis HO Ying-foo
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(from 2020.04.20 起)