

**Consumer Council's submission to
LegCo Panel on Economic Services
on "Strengthen the Protection for Mainland Visitors"**

1. The Consumer Council is pleased to submit its views on "Strengthening the Protection for Mainland Visitors".

Consumer Protection Legislation Review

2. The Consumer Council has set up a working group to review consumer protection legislation. The aim is to improve and strengthen our legislative regime, to provide better protection to tourists shopping in Hong Kong, and to make law enforcement in the relevant areas of undesirable sales practices and misleading trade description more effective.

3. As a long-term goal, the review will study the feasibility and introduction of a trade practices law embracing all aspects of misleading, deceptive and unfair sales practices.

4. The Council is also represented on the Government's Working Group to Review Consumer Protection Related Legislation. The Council will report to the Government on the findings and proposals upon completion of the review.

Tripartite Arrangement on Consumer Complaints Handling

5. A tripartite mutual referral arrangement between the Police, the Customs and Excise Department, and the Consumer Council has been set up and put into action to deal with consumer complaints from mainland tourists.

6. Under the arrangement, depending on the nature of the complaints, complaint cases will be referred to the relevant authority. The police will take up cases of suspected deception, the Customs and Excise Department will investigate complaints of false trade marks, counterfeit goods and copyright violations, and the Consumer Council will assist consumers to seek consumer redress.

7. This arrangement is so designed in that any complaints will be dealt with swiftly, and effective action taken to crack down on malpractices.

Consumer Pre-shopping Advice

8. The Consumer Council will liaise with its counterparts in the mainland in the dissemination of consumer advice and information. Earlier this month, with the co-operation of the Chinese Consumers' Association, a series of shopping advice and alerts were posted on the websites of a network of consumer bodies in some 46 provinces and cities in the mainland, and issued to the media there.

9. The Council will embark on a programme of pre-shopping information specifically on the goods and services popular with mainland visitors. The information will be disseminated to all potential or actual visitors from the mainland.

Post-shopping Assistance

10. Subject to availability of additional fund, a special task force of Putonghua-speaking Complaint Officers will be assigned on standby to handle consumer complaints from mainland visitors swiftly, hopefully, before their departure from Hong Kong.

Consumer Council
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