

Consumer Council Keeps Up With The Times And Achieves Good Governance

Zhang Mengying

消費者委員會與時並進 實現良好管治



- ▲ The Consumer Council was awarded the “Directors Of The Year Awards 2022” (Category: Statutory/Non-Profit Distributing Organisations – Boards) by the Hong Kong Institute of Directors in recognition of its excellence in corporate governance practices that have been upheld since its establishment.

消委會榮獲香港董事學會頒發「2022年度傑出董事獎」（類別：法定/非分配利潤組織 - 董事會），自創立以來一直秉承的優良企業管治受到專業的肯定。

The Chairman and all Members of the Consumer Council have kept pace with the times, leading the organisation to perform its statutory functions, providing overall strategy, and managing the Council’s operations and consumer protection functions.

The Hong Kong Institute of Directors (HKIoD) recognised the outstanding level of governance with a “Director of the Year” award in the category of “Statutory/Non-profit-distributing Organisations – Board.”

“The Members of the Consumer Council demonstrate a good understanding of their roles, responsibilities, good corporate governance, and sustainability. Sustainable consumption has been one of the strategic goals of the Council’s three-year

strategic plans since 2013. The scope of the Council’s work is extensive and covers a range of topics, such as energy efficiency, waste reduction and recycling, green product choices, and more. The Council truly deserves the Award,” the panel of judges said.

Strict governance to protect consumers’ rights

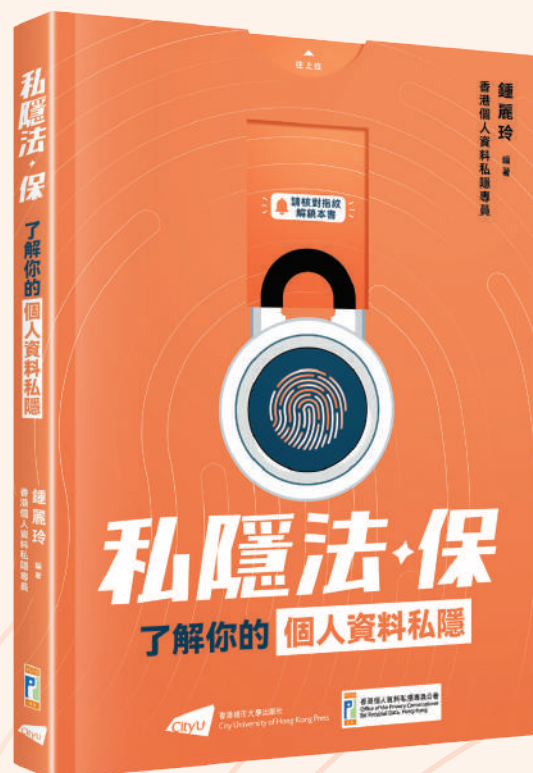
The Council’s Chairman, Mr Clement Chan Kam-wing, BBS, MH, JP, explained that the Consumer Council was established in April 1974 to monitor the quality of products and services in the market. Back then, the oil crisis triggered high inflation and the prices of daily necessities, food, and oil products soared, even as quality varied.

“Over the past 50 years, despite the ever-changing market environment, the Consumer Council has always been committed

**鍾麗玲****Ms Ada CHUNG Lai-ling**

香港個人資料私隱專員 編著

Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong



* Chinese version only

私隱法·保

了解你的 個人資料私隱

The Treasure-trove of Privacy —
Understanding Your Personal Data Privacy

本書以《個人資料(私隱)條例》(《私隱條例》)為基礎，深入淺出地介紹《私隱條例》下保障個人資料私隱的原則，從生活的層面分析個人資料私隱的風險和陷阱，並以真實個案解釋《私隱條例》的應用，讓讀者了解如何保護自己的個人資料。

The new book contains a comprehensive account of the data protection principles under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (PDPO) using plain and simple language that is easy for readers to understand. It illustrates the application of the PDPO using real-life scenarios and decided court cases to help readers understand how to safeguard their personal data privacy.

重點 Highlights :

- 保障個人資料原則
Data Protection Principles
- 打擊「起底」
Combating Doxxing
- 私隱保障趨勢
Trends of Privacy Protection
 - ◆ 人工智能 Artificial Intelligence
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to being the trusted voice of consumers and to building a safe and sustainable consumer environment in a fair and equitable marketplace,” says Mr Chan.

The Council performs its duties under the Consumer Council Ordinance.

One of its key tasks is to provide information on product quality and safety, collect market information on service sectors and consumer goods, share consumer information and promote sustainable consumption. At the same time, the Council also educates the consumer.

Mr Chan said that the Council consists of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and currently 20 Members, all of whom are appointed by the government. The Members come from different fields and are diverse in terms of skills, knowledge, and experience.

The structure of the Council is clear, and its responsibilities are well-defined, thus enhancing independence and accountability and ensuring effective governance.



▲ Acting as spokesperson for the Consumer Council, Mr Clement Chan Kam-wing, BBS, MH, JP, often presents the Council's research and survey reports to the media and the public, as well as expressing views on issues related to consumer rights.
主席陳錦榮經常代表消委會向傳媒及公眾解釋消委會的研究及調查報告，亦會就涉及消費權益的議題發表意見。

“As the Chairman, I am primarily responsible for leading the Council in effective governance, overseeing the Council's direction, strategy, and performance indicators, and supporting the government on consumer protection issues,” says Mr Chan.

“The Chief Executive, as head of management, reports to me on the implementation of the Council's strategies, policies, and initiatives, and is responsible for day-to-day communication with the Commerce and

Economic Development Bureau.”

In addition, good governance requires specific goals. The Council conducts a strategic planning every three years, in which all Members and staff from all levels would participate and establish a broad plan for the next three years. At the same time, the Council sets a series of key performance indicators (KPI) to measure performance each year.

Responding to the challenges of the digital era

In the digital age, artificial intelligence (AI) is a double-edged sword that brings both convenience and risk to people's lives, and this is also true in consumer life.

To meet this challenge, the Council has conducted its first study on the application of AI in e-commerce in Hong Kong and published a report *Fostering Consumer Trust – Ethical Artificial Intelligence in E-commerce in 2022*, suggesting the government establish a local policy on AI development and encourage the industry to formulate a “Consumer Charter” on the



▲ Chairman Mr Clement Chan Kam-wing, BBS, MH, JP, (Left) and Chief Executive Ms Gilly Wong Fung-han (Right) have been working closely together, complementing each other's roles, to strive for the protection of consumer rights.
主席陳錦榮(左)與總幹事黃鳳嫻(右)一直合作無間，職務相輔相成，一同為保障消費者權益而努力。



REINFORCE CONNECTIONS

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application of AI to protect consumer rights.

With the rapid development of the digital economy, more and more transactions are conducted online. Therefore, the Council has also expressed its views to the government on issues related to the digital economy to protect consumers' rights. These moves include public consultations on the regulation of crowdfunding activities, proposing regulatory requirements for virtual asset trading platforms, and publishing discussion papers on e-HKD, crypto assets, and stable currencies.

At the same time, the Council has also increased consumer awareness and education on AI, hoping that consumers can embrace AI safely and securely.

In terms of complaint channels, Mr Chan said that the pandemic over the past three years has led to changes in consumer habits, with about 74% to 80% of consumers complaining online from 2020 to the first quarter of 2023.

In response to the new trend, the Council is actively developing a new complaint handling system, including the "Online Dispute Resolution" mechanism, which allows consumers and vendors to communicate directly on the Council's online platform.

If both parties still need the Council's assistance, colleagues can also contact and mediate with both parties on the platform. The new system is expected to be in operation by the end of 2024. 

消

費者委員會（消委會）主席及全體委員與時並進，帶領機構有效履行其法定職能，提供整體策略方針，管理消委會運作及消費者保障事宜。其傑出管治，獲得各界認可，獲頒香港董事學會「法定/非分配利潤組織 - 董事會」類別之「2022年度傑出董事」。

「消費者委員會的委員表現出對其角色、責任、優秀的企業管治和可持續性發展的良好理解。自2013年以來，可持續消費一直是委員會三年期策略計劃的目標之一。消費者委員會的工作範圍廣泛，涵蓋了如能源效率、廢物減少和回收利用、綠色產品選擇等一系列主題。消委會獲此殊榮當之無愧。」評審團評價。

管治嚴謹 保障消費者權益

消委會主席陳錦榮先生介紹，上世紀70年代，石油危機引發高通脹，日用品、糧油食品價格飆升，但質素參差，消委會在此背景下於1974年4月成立，以監察市面上的產品及服務質素。

「過去50年，市場環境雖然不斷轉變，

不變的是消委會一直致力成為消費者信賴的聲音，為消費者在公平公正的市場中建立安全及可持續的消費環境，」陳主席說。

消委會根據《消費者委員會條例》履行職責，其中重點任務之一就是提供產品質素及安全的資訊、搜集服務行業和消費品的市場資訊、發布消費信息及推廣可持續消費。同時，消委會亦對消費者進行教育工作。

陳主席繼續介紹，委員會由一位主席、一位副主席，以及現時20位委員組成，他們全部由政府委任。成員來自不同領域，在技能、知識及經驗各方面均具多元化。

消委會的架構清晰，職責分明，由此增加獨立性及問責性，保證有效管治。

「作為主席，我主要負責領導委員會進行有效管治，監督委員會方向、策略和表現指標，支持政府的消費者保障事宜。總幹事作為管理層的首長，負責向我匯報，執行消委會策略、政策和措施，亦負責與商務及經濟發展局（商經局）進行日常溝通，」陳主席說。



▲ The Consumer Council exchanges views with other consumer organisations from time to time to strengthen connections and cooperation. Chairman Mr Clement Chan Kam-wing, BBS, MH, JP, led a group of Council Members and senior management to visit the Macao SAR Government Consumer Council and Hengqin in late May to learn about the latest developments in the area.

消委會不時與鄰近地區的消保組織交流，加強聯繫與合作。主席陳錦榮於5月底率領一眾委員及消委會管理層，拜訪澳門消委會，並到橫琴考察，了解當地最新發展。

2022年模範董事專訪

此外，實現良好管治還需具體的目標。陳主席分享，消委會每三年便進行一次策略規劃，各級同事代表、管理層等所有成員均會參與，以確立未來三年的工作大計。同時，委員會每年會訂立一系列的關鍵績效指標來衡量工作表現。

積極應對數碼化時代挑戰

數碼化時代，人工智能是把雙刃劍，既給人們生活帶來便利，也帶來一定的風險，在消費生活方面亦是如此。

為了應對這一挑戰，消委會首次就人工智能在香港電子商務中的應用進行研究，並於2022年發表題為「道德與信心共融——促進電子商務人工智能發展」的報告，倡議政府加快建構一套適用於本地的人工智能發展政策，鼓勵行業制定應用人工智能的「消費者約章」保障消費權益。

數碼經濟發展迅速，消費者在網上的交易活動愈趨頻繁。因此，消委會亦就與數碼經濟相關的議題，向政府表達意見，維護消費者權益，當中包括規管眾籌活動的公眾諮詢、虛擬資產交易平台的建議監管規定、有關「數碼港元」、加密資產和穩定幣的討論文件等。

同時，消委會亦增加消費者對人工智能的認知教育，希望消費者可以安全、安心地迎接人工智能年代的來臨。

在投訴途徑方面，陳主席介紹，過去三年疫情令消費者的習慣有所改變，由2020年至2023年首季，有約74%至80%的消費者透過網上投訴。

為應對新趨勢，消委會正積極開發全新投訴處理系統，當中包括「線上糾紛解決機制」(Online Dispute Resolution)，

讓消費者與商戶在消委會的線上平台作直接溝通。

如雙方仍需消委會協助，同事亦可在平台與雙方聯繫及進行調停。新系統預計會於2024底正式運作。📺



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