

Public support for proposed changes to the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act

The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) recently concluded the public consultation on the proposed amendments to the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (CPFTA). The four week long consultation ended on 15 June 2016.

2. Prior to public consultation, MTI had gathered feedback from key stakeholders through industry engagement sessions. Their views were considered in the proposed amendments which MTI consulted the public on.

3. The respondents expressed support for the proposed amendments, namely for SPRING Singapore (SPRING) to be appointed as the administering agency for the CPFTA, and for SPRING to be given investigative and enforcement powers. This would enable SPRING to gather evidence and take up court injunctions against business entities and individuals who engage in unfair practices.

4. Contributors were also supportive of the additional measures that the courts may impose on errant retailers, such as requiring them to publicise injunction orders and to notify SPRING of changes to their entity and employment status. This would allow SPRING to monitor errant retailers and prevent them from sidestepping injunction orders by setting up new entities to continue with the unfair practices.

5. The proposed changes to the CPFTA aim to provide greater protection for consumers and enable them to make informed purchasing decisions. Consumers who require assistance or have feedback on unfair trading practices should approach the Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) and Singapore Tourism Board (STB) who remain the first points of contact for consumers and tourists respectively. CASE and STB would assist consumers through negotiation, mediation and/or voluntary compliance agreements. Consumers can also file a claim for compensation and recourse with the Small Claims Tribunal (SCT) or the courts.

6. MTI would like to thank all stakeholders and members of the public who have participated in the public consultation exercise. We will consider the feedback in the finalisation of the proposed amendments. The CPFTA (Amendment) Bill is targeted to be tabled in Parliament by the end of this year.

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