

MEDIA RELEASE

16 December 2022

CCCS SEEKS COURT ORDER FOR TRIPLE LIFESTYLE MARKETING PTE. LTD. TO CEASE ALLEGED FALSE OR MISLEADING CLAIMS ON ITS ALKALINE WATER FILTRATION SYSTEMS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE PACKAGES

1. The Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (“**CCCS**”) has filed court proceedings in the State Courts against Triple Lifestyle Marketing Pte. Ltd. (“**TLM**”) ¹ and its director, Tan Jia Huang², under the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act 2003 (the “**CPFTA**”). CCCS has applied to the State Courts to make findings against TLM that it has made false claims and misled consumers on its alkaline water filtration systems and maintenance service packages. CCCS has also applied to the court for an injunction to stop TLM from engaging in this alleged conduct.
2. Under the CPFTA, it is an unfair practice for a retailer to make a false claim or mislead a consumer, or to accept payment for the supply of goods or services when the retailer knows or ought to know that the retailer will not be able to supply the goods or services within the period specified by the retailer or within a reasonable period, in relation to a consumer transaction.

Background

3. TLM supplies water dispensers, alkaline water filtration systems and maintenance service packages to consumers. Tan Jia Huang is the sole director and shareholder of TLM.
4. CCCS had commenced an investigation into TLM following a referral from the Consumers Association of Singapore (“**CASE**”) in November 2020. In view of the high number of complaints received by CASE against TLM, CASE had issued company alerts³ on TLM in February 2021 and in April 2022⁴ to warn consumers of TLM’s unfair practices. CASE had asked TLM to enter into a Voluntary Compliance Agreement (“**VCA**”), however TLM did not sign the VCA.

¹ Under section 9 of the CPFTA, CCCS may apply to the State Courts for a declaration that the practice engaged by the supplier is an unfair practice; and apply for an injunction restraining the supplier from engaging in the unfair practice.

² Under section 10 of the CPFTA, CCCS may apply to the State Courts for an injunction restraining individuals from knowingly abetting, aiding, permitting or procuring the supplier to engage in the unfair practice.

³ CASE company alert (February 2021):

https://www.case.org.sg/consumeralert_company_detail.aspx?caid=78

⁴ CASE company alert (April 2022):

https://www.case.org.sg/consumeralert_company_detail.aspx?caid=81

Alleged Unfair Practices

5. CCCS is asking the State Courts to make findings that TLM has engaged in various alleged unfair practices, including the following:
 - a. TLM made the false claim that TLM or TLM's products were accredited and that Thomson Medical Centre was one of its customers;
 - b. TLM represented that its water dispenser was free for a limited time when the price benefit or advantage did not exist;
 - c. TLM misled consumers that it would repair or replace faulty water dispensers or provide the change of water filters when requested by consumers to do so under the maintenance service package, or misled consumers by giving false excuses about its delay or inability to do so;
 - d. From at least January 2020 until in or around December 2020, TLM accepted payment for its maintenance service packages which included the provision of a 1-year warranty for its "tankless" water dispenser to consumers, when TLM knew or ought to have known that it would not be able to repair or replace faulty water dispensers with functioning units within the warranty period; and
 - e. TLM misled consumers that alkaline and/or filtered water can prevent or improve the condition of diseases such as osteoporosis, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, kidney or colonic disorders and psoriasis.
6. CCCS has also applied to the State Courts for an injunction to stop Tan Jia Huang from knowingly abetting, aiding, permitting or procuring TLM to engage in various alleged unfair practices, including the unfair practices listed above.
7. Consumers who encounter false or misleading claims can approach CASE for assistance. For more information, please visit www.case.org.sg or call 9795 8397.

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About the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore

The Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (“**CCCS**”) is a statutory board of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. CCCS is the administering agency of the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act 2003 or “CPFTA” which protects consumers against unfair trade practices in Singapore. CCCS also administers and enforces the Competition Act 2004 which empowers CCCS to investigate and adjudicate on anti-competitive activities, issue directions to stop and/or prevent anti-competitive activities and impose financial penalties. Our mission is to make markets work well to create opportunities and choices for business and consumers in Singapore.

For more information, please visit www.cccs.gov.sg.

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Annex A

ROLES OF AGENCIES UNDER THE CONSUMER PROTECTION (FAIR TRADING) ACT 2003

The Consumers Association of Singapore (“**CASE**”) and Singapore Tourism Board (“**STB**”) remain the first points of contact for local consumers and tourists respectively to handle complaints. They will assist in obtaining redress and/or compensation through negotiation and/or mediation. Errant suppliers may enter into a Voluntary Compliance Agreement (“**VCA**”) with CASE or STB, where they will agree in writing to stop the unfair trade practice and compensate affected local consumers or tourists. Errant suppliers who persist in unfair trade practices will be referred to the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore (“**CCCS**”) for investigation and follow-up actions.

CCCS is the administering agency for the CPFTA and has investigative and enforcement powers to take timely actions against recalcitrant suppliers. CCCS looks into cases of errant suppliers who persist in unfair trade practices. Specifically, it is able to:

- Gather evidence against persistent errant suppliers;
- File timely injunction applications with the courts; and
- Enforce compliance with injunction orders issued by the courts.