



# CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

## 新加坡消费者协会

செய்தியுற உயர்வுகூட்டுதல் சங்கம்

PERSATUAN PENGGUNA-PENGGUNA SINGAPURA

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16 May 2008

The Forum Editor  
The Straits Times  
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### Clarification on paying CASE's membership

We refer to the letter "What's the point of paying Case membership fees if it can't solve my problem?" by Mr Loh De Liang (ST 1 May).

As a consumer organization, CASE assists members of the public in two main ways.

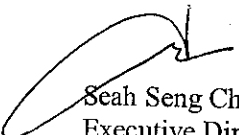
First, we provide advice to those who call our hotlines or visit our customer service centre. We will guide the consumer on the options available should he decide to pursue with the vendor directly. Such assistance is free-of-charge.

However, there are those who require us to represent them in the dispute with the vendors. As a membership-based organization, CASE will collect membership fee to establish the necessary legal relationship so that we could made representation on our member's behalf. Such representation would entail amongst other things, writing to the vendor, negotiations and mediation.

Additionally, the fee will enable CASE to dedicate our resources to represent the member. We are unable to link membership fees to a guaranteed settlement in favour of the member. It is untenable for us to do so. Doing so is akin to paying lawyers only when favourable legal outcomes are achieved.

In Mr Loh's case, he had the option of just obtaining our advice and deal with the vendor directly. He will not have to make any payment if no representation on our part is required. However he decided to file his case with us and wanted us to deal with the matter on his behalf and as such the membership fee becomes payable. Despite repeated attempts and our best effort, we were unable to resolve the dispute.

As a consumer watchdog, CASE is fully committed to assisting consumers to the best of our ability. We are confident that Mr Loh will understand that there will be occasions when the vendor is not willing to settle. In such an instance, the consumer should then consider bringing his claim to Court, including the Small Claims Tribunal.

  
Seah Seng Choon  
Executive Director  
CASE