



CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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CASE takes Mr. Chiok Wee Joo of Olena, Bez Gallery and The Exquisite Promenade to Court

The Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) has commenced legal proceedings against Mr. Chiok Wee Joo, the sole proprietor of three furniture businesses (i.e. Olena (*formerly trading as Mattress Atrium*), Bez Gallery (*formerly trading as Michelle Mattress*) and The Exquisite Promenade) under the provisions of the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (CPFTA). CASE seeks to have Mr. Chiok Wee Joo declared as having carried out unfair practices in respect of those businesses and for an injunction to restrain Mr. Chiok for further carrying out such unfair practices. A hearing date in the State Court has been fixed for 28 August 2015.

The Injunction Proposals Review Panel (IPRP) has granted approval to CASE to apply for the injunction under the CPFTA. Our lawyers have filed an Originating Summons at the District Courts on 5 August 2015. If the injunction is granted, Mr. Chiok, his agents and/or servants will be restrained from engaging in the said unfair practices under the CPFTA.

In the past seven and a half years, CASE received 44 complaint cases against the aforementioned companies for unfair practice (*see Table 1*). In November 2013, CASE published a Consumer Alert on Olena on our website to warn consumers of such unfair practices.¹

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Jan-July 2015
3	0	6	1	2	11	12	9

Table 1. No. of complaints (filed and assisted cases) handled by CASE against Mr. Chiok Wee Joo's furniture businesses (i.e. Mattress Atrium, Olena, Bez Gallery and The Exquisite Promenade) from Jan 2008 to July 2015.

An analysis of the complaints revealed that Mr. Chiok's modus operandi with respect to all his businesses involved taking full payment for furniture upon representing furniture were available at a particular time when he knew or reasonably knew that they were not. In some instances, he would

¹ Consumer Alert: Beware of Delayed Delivery Orders by Furniture Companies
(https://www.case.org.sg/consumer_guides_consumeralerts_archive.aspx?month=November&year=2013)

persuade consumers to make full payment of their purchases upfront by asserting that he was giving them a special or preferential price. A large number of the complaints were related to transactions that took place at furniture or exhibition fairs. In many cases, goods were not delivered by their promised delivery dates. Where delivery were made, the complaints reveal that the goods delivered were different from what the consumer had asked for, such as being of a different size, colour or model. CASE understands that several consumers have reported the matter to the Police and investigations are currently on-going.

CASE had written to Mr. Chiok on a number of occasions and requested several meetings but to no avail. We invited him to sign a Voluntary Compliance Agreement (VCA) in May 2015 to stop engaging in unfair practices and given him ample time to do so, but there was no real attempt from Mr. Chiok to contact CASE. In view of this, CASE decided to apply to the IPRP to injunct Mr. Chiok and his three businesses.

This is the sixth injunction application by CASE since 2004. The previous injunction taken out by CASE was against Concord Developments Pte Ltd in 2012.

CASE would like to urge all consumers to exercise prudence and to carry out some basic checks when buying furniture. They should stay away from businesses that have multiple negative reviews or feedback about their products or services. We also advise consumers not to pay a large deposit and to pay the rest of the purchase price only when the furniture is delivered on time and in good condition.

Lim Biow Chuan
President
Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE)