

## YOUR RIGHTS AS A CONSUMER

This fact sheet is aimed at identifying what your rights as a consumer are as recognised by the United Nations.

### Your consumer rights

We are all consumers and, as consumers, we all have rights. Consumers have eight basic rights recognised by the United Nations. These rights originated from former US President J.F. Kennedy's 1962 declaration of four basic consumer rights:

- the right to safety; the right to be informed; the right to choose; and the right to be heard. The International Organisation of Consumer Unions has since added four more rights:
- the right to redress; the right to satisfaction of basic needs; the right to consumer education; and the right to a healthy environment.

His declaration created a charter for the world's consumer groups which have since expanded to reflect the comprehensive needs of consumers in the marketplace.

The guidelines were formulated to:

- assist countries to achieve and maintain adequate protection for consumers
- encourage ethical conduct in the marketplace
- encourage the development of market conditions which provide consumers with greater choice at lower prices.

After extensive international consultation, the guidelines were adopted by the UN General Assembly in April 1985, and updated in 1999. The eight rights listed above are the work of consumer groups and many government consumer affairs agencies around the world.

### The eight consumer rights

There are eight basic consumer rights. These are the basic rights outlined in a United Nations agreement that Australia is a party to.

#### 1. The Right to Safety

To be protected against products, production methods and services which are hazardous to health or life.

## 2. The Right to be Informed

To be given the facts needed to make an informed choice, to be protected against dishonest or misleading advertising and labelling.

## 3. The Right to Choose

To be able to select from a range of products and services, offered at competitive prices with an assurance of satisfactory quality.

## 4. The Right to be Heard

To have consumer interests represented in the making and execution of government policy, and in the development of products and services.

## 5. The Right to Redress

To receive a fair settlement of just claims, including compensation for faulty goods, misrepresentation or unsatisfactory services.

## 6. The Right to Consumer Education

To acquire knowledge and skills needed to make informed choices about goods and services, while being aware of basic rights and responsibilities.

## 7. The Right to a Healthy Environment

To live and work in an environment which is non-threatening to the well-being of present and future generations

## 8. The Right to Satisfaction of Basic Needs

To have access to basic and essential goods and services: adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, education and sanitation.