

# 持牌旅行社勝在較有保障

## Buy from licensed agents with better protection

**最**近有團購網站突然結業，令消費者與會員同受損失。雖然議會早在二零一一年就已向旅行社代理商註冊處舉報，表示該公司可能涉嫌無牌經營，但註冊處把個案轉給警方後，警方認為證據不足，所以沒有檢控。讓我提醒消費者，假如想在網上購買旅遊產品，最穩妥的方法是向香港持牌旅行社的網站購買，付款後還要儘快向旅行社索取蓋上印花的收據，以獲得旅遊業賠償基金的保障。

為了推動中小型旅行社善用資訊科技，政府已撥出了港幣一千萬元，將透過議會以配對形式提供資助，最高資助額為港幣十萬元(見「主題故事」)。議會為此已做了大量工作，第一輪申請將於七月八日開始，為期兩個月，希望會員切勿錯過機會。

今年八月一日起，機場管理局將徵收機場建設費，藉此為第三條跑道提供興建資金。雖然議會一直都支持儘快興建第三條跑道，但由會員代收建設費的話，不僅工作量會增加，而且承受的財務風險也會上升。因此，議會已要求機管局向代收建設費的會員提供一定補償。

今年入境業的表現不大理想，內地入境團的市況尤其令人擔心：向議會登記的內地團數目與去年相比大跌了五成以上。跌幅之所以如此巨大，一來是有極少數業者發起所謂的不合作運動，阻撓議會的監管工作；二來是內地團大多數都是購物團，團員大多數會被帶到指定的購物點去購物。同業必須明白，內地旅客的旅遊經驗日益豐富，靠購物回扣輕易獲取巨利的老路，恐怕快要走到盡頭了。✎

董耀中



A group-buying website has suddenly closed down recently, bringing losses to consumers and members alike. Although the TIC reported the website's suspected unlicensed trading to the Travel Agents Registry as early as 2011, which referred the case to the police, the police did not press charges against the website because of a lack of evidence. **Consumers are reminded that if they wish to buy travel products online, the most reliable way is to buy from the websites of Hong Kong's licensed travel agents and then get a franked receipt from the travel agents as soon as possible so as to have the protection offered by the Travel Industry Compensation Fund.**

To motivate SME travel agents to use IT, the Government has allocated HK\$10 million for them, with each eligible one to be subsidised a maximum of HK\$100,000 through the TIC on a matching basis (see "Cover Story"). The TIC has already done a great deal of work for the matching fund scheme, and the first round of applications, which will last two months, will be open on 8 July. Members should not let this chance go.

Starting from 1 August this year, the Airport Authority is to collect the Airport Construction Fee (ACF) to fund the construction of the third runway. Since the workload of members and their financial risks will increase if they need to collect the ACF, the TIC, despite its continuous support for the third runway all along, has already requested the Airport Authority to offer some compensation to members for the collection of the ACF.

The performance of the inbound industry has been rather unsatisfactory this year, and the mainland inbound tour market has been particularly worrying: **the number of mainland tours registered with the TIC has dropped more than 50% year on year. Such a huge plunge is caused, firstly, by the so-called non-cooperation campaign instigated by a very small group of traders to hinder the TIC from carrying out its regulatory work; and secondly, by the fact that most of the tours from the mainland are shopping tours and most members of these tours are taken to designated shopping outlets to shop. Traders must realise that their well-trodden path to easy and big money through shopping commission will soon turn into a cul-de-sac as tourists from the mainland are becoming more experienced in travel.** ✎

Joseph Tung