

**INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION
TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU**

Document: 28

**GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM FOR REGULATORS
Hong Kong, China, 7 -8 December 2002**

PRESENTATION

**CONSUMER PROTECTION
IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION**

**Dr Bob Horton
Deputy Chairman
Australian Communications Authority**

Consumer Protection in the Asia–Pacific Region

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Deputy Chairman
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Competition policy and consumer protection

- Asia–Pacific region
 - diversity: cultural, geographic, economic
 - » **But**
 - commonalities of approach to consumer protection
 - » regulation + managed transition to liberalisation
 - » communications-specific regulator
 - » use of advisory committees



Consumer protection initiatives in Asia–Pacific countries

- Promoting consumer input into policy-making: *consumer advisory forums*
(Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia)
- Universal service obligation to ensure supply of services to the community
(Hong Kong, Pakistan, Thailand, Australia)



Consumer protection initiatives (continued)

- Regulatory initiatives—pre-selection & mobile number portability
(Hong Kong, Thailand, Australia)
- Devolving responsibilities to industry—standards & codes of practice
(Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Australia)



Consumer protection initiatives

(continued)

- Consumer education & information programmes
(China, Philippines, Singapore, Australia)
- Programmes targeting Internet and e-commerce issues—privacy, fraud, cyber laws
(Philippines, Sri Lanka)
- Accreditation schemes for e-businesses
(Singapore)



The way forward

- Information exchanges between policy makers, regulators, consumer groups and industry associations are valuable to the development of appropriate consumer protection measures
 - **however**
- Economic and demographic circumstances of individual countries will also influence the approach to consumer protection



Conclusions

- the benefits of competition must be balanced with consumer protection regulation
- self-regulatory arrangements can support consumer protection
- the adequacy of consumer protection measures need to be reassessed in light of new technologies and services

