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Annual report
consumer.

From the chair.

Through 2022 Consumer NZ has continued to be the independent voice that champions and empowers consumers in Aotearoa. We've had to work hard to maintain the activity and public profile expected of us in a challenging year. Our campaigns and advocacy on supermarket competition, flight rights and product repairability were highlights. The success of this work underlines the crucial role independent consumer advocacy plays in our economy.



- Robert Aitken



From the CE.

2022 presented us with many challenges. Our mission is to understand the changing consumer landscape and help more people in Aotearoa navigate it with confidence. We focused on growing our data and insights capability in 2022. Our data products have become a trusted source of information on consumer behaviour and attitudes used widely by businesses, the government and our team to understand consumer concerns and make things better for us all. Thanks to all our stakeholders, partners, members, generous donors and the hard-working Consumer team.

- Jon Duffy

Advocacy work.

For many New Zealanders, the price of groceries was a key concern, and the Commerce Commission's recommendations in March 2022 left many feeling that the prices on supermarket shelves wouldn't be changing anytime soon.

Using the new petition function on our website, we launched our #StopTheSuperProfits campaign and rallied all New Zealanders to demand swift action in the supermarket sector. We reached 77,607 signatures in 21 days! The government announced it was going to go beyond the Commerce Commission's recommendations and require supermarkets to open up their wholesale operations to competitors.

We also made a number of submissions across a range of consumer-related issues – from our call for mandatory unit pricing to regulating the use of biometric data.



171,914

supporters
up 35%



101,785

signatures on
all our petitions



22

submissions
completed

Donations.

In September 2022, we launched our first-ever brand-led fundraising campaign: Help us keep the pressure on. We raised \$33,219 during a short but strong 4-week sprint, with BAU contributions bringing our total donations for 2022 to \$46,468.

As a small non-profit, our campaign and advocacy work is funded exclusively by our members' support through subscription fees or donations. We want to take this opportunity to tautoko our members and donors. Your generous contributions and ongoing support enables us to do more.

Thank you for helping us keep the pressure on. Together, we can advocate for impactful change, education and regulation.



Key campaigns.

We campaigned on issues that materially impact consumers' lives. By applying key learnings from the previous years' advocacy and engagement research, we connected directly with our members and supporters through our campaigns. We want the voices of all consumers to be heard so that New Zealanders can play a role in creating change.

We called for airlines to communicate honestly with passengers about their consumer rights and reason for cancellations and delays. We had 20 high-profile media mentions about our Flight Rights campaign, and the Commerce Commission started investigating our complaint about Jetstar. As a result of our campaign, Air New Zealand updated its website and guide for passengers affected by cancellations or delays.

77,607

Supermarkets

10,831

Flight Rights

13,347

Right to Repair

Partnerships.

In 2022 we partnered with several agencies keen to support the work we do on behalf of consumers in Aotearoa.

The Ministry of Health supported our ongoing work investigating health products and topics, and with help from the National Emergency Management Agency and Toka Tū Ake – EQC, we published comprehensive and practical advice encouraging emergency preparedness. We supported Maritime NZ and NZSAR's summer safety campaigns and conducted an expanded test of EVs and hybrids thanks to the Ministry of Transport.

We also partnered with the Consumer Advocacy Council on a major project to simplify electricity bills. At the same time, the Commerce Commission asked us to conduct an independent review of billing apps provided by the major telcos. With support from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, we investigated breaches of the Privacy Act in the rental sector.

As consumer interests increasingly underlie important social issues, working alongside like-minded partners is pivotal to achieving the meaningful outcomes for consumers we're striving towards. We're looking forward to continuing the mahi in 2023.

Sentiment Tracker.

Sentiment Tracker provided us with rich and valuable insights about New Zealanders' changing perspectives and behaviours. Since our launch in 2021, we have been able to track emerging trends through quarterly findings in 2022, continually expanding our data. This rich information informs the development of our content and campaigns.

Rising costs

New Zealanders became increasingly concerned about the cost of living, leaving other issues like housing and crime in the dust.

Consumers shopping local

While price remained the primary purchase consideration, consumers increasingly opted for less expensive substitutes and became more mindful of their spending.

Shifting property perceptions

More than half of homeowners said they couldn't afford their property at its current value.

Declining consumer trust

Consumer trust suffered – with supermarkets, banks, and energy sectors experiencing the most significant drops.

As well as enhancing our credibility in the media throughout 2022, Sentiment Tracker proved itself an indispensable resource for the government and businesses.

Consume This

podcast

Consume This won its first award at the 2022 NZ Podcast Awards, and Fair Go adapted our Right to Repair campaign-inspired episode into TV.

We also released our first externally-funded mini-series thanks to the Ministry of Health, and have two more episodes commissioned.

Top 5 episodes in 2022

- 1 An Attempt at Intimacy
- 2 Access Over Ownership: The Sharing Economy
- 3 The Bank of Mum & Dad Parts 1&2
- 4 Bamboozled: Can We Kick the Plastic?
- 5 Cut & Chuck: Where Faulty Goods Go To Die



4,300+
hours spent listening



94%
rated it 'good'
or 'very good'



Most popular.

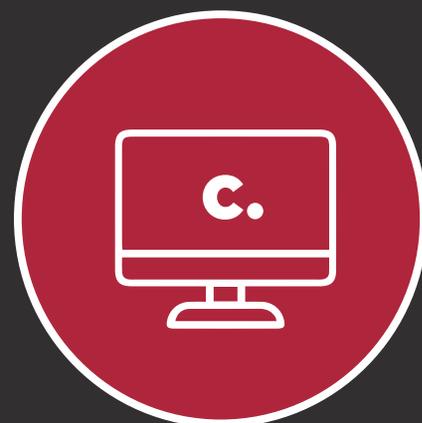
Most popular social posts:

- How to stack your dishwasher
- Single-use plastics ban
- Renters' rights
- Flight rights petition
- Your rights if your flight is cancelled
- Food price increases
- Meal delivery fees investigation
- Property manager mystery shop
- Petrol saving tips
- Top 5 over-packaged products



Most popular new articles:

- Big price differences on rapid antigen tests
- Worse than water - the laundry detergents you should avoid, plus the best buys
- Scrapping low-use power plans will see many paying more for electricity
- I spent a week with an air fryer - are they worth all the hype?
- Child car seats buying guide
- SolarZero: is it worth it?
- Oven symbols and controls
- Power company satisfaction survey 2022
- Three more sunscreens fail to meet SPF claims
- Check your travel insurance policy covers Covid-19 cancellations



Our services.

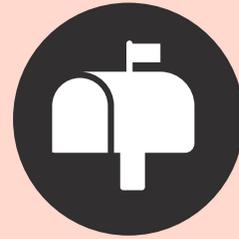
Our contact centre and consumer rights advisers:



Responded to

8,496

emails



Distributed more than

100,000

magazines



Answered

11,872

phone calls



171,914

Members and supporters

↑ **14%**



13,467

Instagram followers

↑ **25.7%**

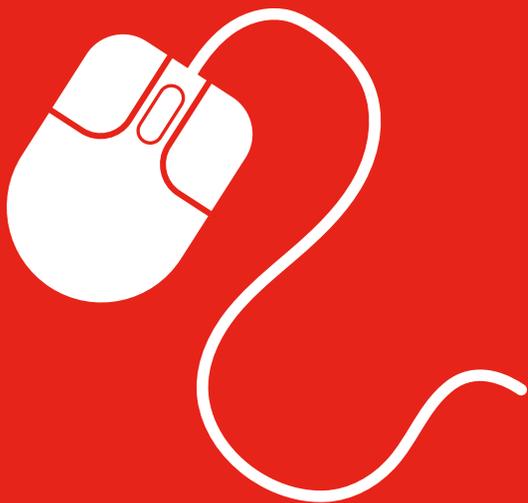


40,592

Facebook followers

↑ **5.7%**

social media reach 2.7 million



In 2022 there were

5.48m

sessions on
consumer.org.nz

↑ **3.3%**

POWERSWITCH

by consumer.

The success of our “Know the Deal” marketing campaign in 2022 led to a substantial increase in site visits and a 16% year-on-year increase in the number of individuals switching energy providers. Through Powerswitch, we estimate that consumers benefited from nearly \$4 million in savings over 2022. Our research reveals savings will continue as many users actively seek alternative options or negotiate improved deals with their current providers by leveraging the knowledge gained through Powerswitch. We’ve helped businesses better understand the competitive landscape by giving them data and insights from the platform.

A comprehensive review by Energy Link has confirmed the effectiveness of Powerswitch and acknowledged its positive impact. However, the review also highlighted the need for ongoing product development to adapt to the evolving industry landscape and accommodate innovation. Powerswitch is fully committed to addressing these concerns and remains optimistic about future opportunities to continue to deliver substantial value to consumers.

608,000

Powerswitch users in 2022

26,921

switches initiated in 2022



Our tests.

Refurbishing and reselling are vital to facilitating the development of a circular economy, so the product team investigated what happens to broken appliances. We uncovered a shocking waste of resources and the disheartening reality of a broken system.

We created an easy-to-repair fault on food mixers, popped a tracker on them, and returned them for repair. We found that it's common policy for manufacturers to write off returned stock by destroying it – several of the food mixers we returned ended up in landfill.

Our investigation resulted in two award-winning podcast episodes, several digital and print articles and extensive media coverage. We also made valuable connections with government policymakers, industry and like-minded NGOs.

This work followed our switch to lifetime scoring of tested products in 2021. We started with vacuum cleaners and washing machines at the end of that year, extending the methodology during 2022 to report the durability of a further nine products.

962

Individual
products
tested in 2022

↑ 29%

Our investigations.

From mystery shopping big box retailers to questioning the power imbalance in the property market, our investigations team researched the issues New Zealanders care about, and those they didn't even know existed.

In 2022, our investigations team found that:

- Renters are feeling pressured to sell themselves to landlords by sharing personal information just to secure a place to live
- Mental health exclusions can apply to health, life and income insurance policies – regardless of whether the policyholder or applicant has been diagnosed with a condition
- Salespeople at big box retailers aren't as upfront about the repairability of your smartphone or laptop as we think they should be
- We think add-on insurances sold at car yards are not worth buying, with many including conditions and exclusions that mean they don't provide good value for money
- Uninsured houses could become more common as premiums are likely to rise

Our investigation team are committed to exploring the grey and murky areas so that consumers don't have to.

Licence programme.

Our People's Choice awards highlight the brands whose own customers are singing their praises. The 2022 awards celebrated several businesses that continued to give their customers exceptional service and experience.

100% Appliances have received the People's Choice award for the eighth year in a row, while TSB bank, and MAS Insurance have reached seven years! Milford KiwiSaver and FMG insurance received the award for the fifth year in a row, and AA car insurance received it for its fourth consecutive year.

We are proud to partner with People's Choice businesses and back the companies that place consumers at the core of their operations.

