

basic goods and services which guarantee survival; adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, education and sanitation.

- **The right to safety**- the right to be protected against the marketing of goods or the provision of services which are hazardous to health and life.
- **The right to be informed**- the right to be protected against dishonest or misleading advertising or labelling. And the right to be given the facts and information needed to make an informed choice.
- **The right to choose**- the right to choose products and services at competitive prices with an assurance of satisfactory quality.
- **The right to be heard**- the right to express consumer interest in the making and execution of government policies.
- **The right to redress**- the right to be compensated for misrepresentation, shoddy goods or unsatisfactory services.
- **The right to consumer education**- the right to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to be an informed consumer.
- **The right to a healthy environment**- the right to live and work in an environment which is neither threatening nor dangerous and which permits a life of dignity and well-being.
- **The right to service** – the right to receive the highest possible standard of service from public and private sector service providers regardless of consumers income and irrespective of whether they live in an urban or rural area.

Consumer Responsibilities

- **Critical Awareness** – the responsibility to be more alert and questioning about the price and quality of goods and services we use.
- **Action** – the responsibility to assert ourselves and act to ensure that we get a fair deal. As long as we remain passive consumers we will be exploited.
- **Social Concern** – the responsibility to be aware of the impact of our consumption on other citizens, especially disadvantaged or powerless groups whether in the local, national or international commu-

nity.

- **Environmental Awareness** – the responsibility to understand the environmental and other consequences of our consumption. We should recognize our individual and social responsibility to conserve natural resources and protect the earth for future generations.
- **Solidarity** – the responsibility to organize together as consumers to develop the strength and influence to promote and protect our interest.

For further information or enquiries contact the Consumer Council office nearest to you:

Suva 4 Carnarvon St
Private Mail Bag
Tel: 330 0792 / 3305 478
Fax: 3300115

Email: consumer@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka Suite 4, Popular Bldg, Vidilo St
PO Box 5396
Tel: 6664 987
Fax: 6652846
Email: consumerltk@connect.com.fj

Labasa 19 Jaduram St
PO Box 64
Tel: 8812 559
Fax: 8812 559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj

www.consumersfiji.org



CONSUMER COUNCIL OF FIJI

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What You Should Know About Us

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About Us

The Consumer Council of Fiji (CCOF) is a statutory organization established under the Consumer Council of Fiji Act -1976 (Cap 235). The Council comes under the Ministry of Industry, Trade, Tourism and Communication. It provides the external pressure as a watchdog to create a fair and just delivery of goods and services. It represents and protects the rights and interests of consumers and in particular the disadvantaged groups, rural poor and women.

CCOF is an advocacy (not regulatory or enforcement) organization, conducting rigorous research and policy analysis on key consumer issues.

CCOF is a full member of UK based Consumers International, a federation of consumer organizations representing over 220 organizations in 115 countries. It is also a member of Standards Association of New Zealand (SANZ) and the Fiji Forum of Non-State Actors.

Our Vision

The Council endorses the General Principles and Guidelines for Consumer Protection of the United Nations as briefly summarized in the General Principles. In that context and through the Government's effort to promote and protect consumer interest in the market place, the Council has the Vision:

To build a conscious and assertive consumer movement in Fiji.

Our Mission

The Council will advocate and safeguard consumer's interests, through vigorous campaigns on key consumer issues, educate consumers on their rights and responsibilities and empower consumers towards a fair and safe marketplace.

Making the consumer voice heard and making it count.

Our Principles

- Campaign constantly and fearlessly to change the policies and practices that adversely affect consumer interests;
- Maintain a highly disciplined results-oriented focus on maximizing impact for consumers;
- Maintain neutrality in solving consumer complaints; and
- Carry out strong financial management and sound operating procedures.

Council Board Membership

Board members of the Council are appointed by the Minister for Industry, Trade, Tourism and Communications for a term(s) as the Minister may determine. The Chairperson of the Council reports to the Minister. From corporate governance perspective, a Board Charter is in place that sets the rules and procedures within which the Board functions. The Board of Directors appoints the Chief Executive Officer to lead and manage the Council affairs within the legal framework and ethical standards.

Functions of the Council

Section 6 of the Consumer Council Act stipulates the functions of the Council. The Council is required to do such acts and things it considers necessary or expedient to ensure that the interests of the consumers of goods and services are promoted and protected.

These functions include:

- advising the Minister on such matters affecting the interests of the consumers;
- making representations to the Government or to any other person/organizations on any issues affecting the interests of consumers;
- collecting, collating and disseminating information in respect of matters affecting the interests of consumers;
- supporting or maintaining legal proceedings initiated by a

- consumer, where such support is deemed necessary;
- conducting research and investigations into matters affecting consumers;
- advising and assist consumers on matters affecting their interests;
- receiving complaints from consumers concerning matters affecting their interests, and on receipt of such complaints, investigate and take appropriate action;
- co-operating with any person, association or organization outside Fiji having similar functions and becoming a member of or affiliate to any international organization concerned with consumer matters; and
- soliciting and accepting for the purposes of the Council any money, land, or other property from the Government, any local authority, public body, organization, or person by way of grant, subsidy, donation, gift, or otherwise.

Council Services

- **Campaign** - campaign effectively on key issues that matter to consumers.
- **Education services** – educate consumers in schools, training institutions, communities and through established organizations.
- **Information & Media Services** – inform consumers through mass media promotions and publications in English, Fijian and Hindi and through organized public events.
- **Research services** – carry out research on selected consumer issues and consumer protection legislations that will ensure consumer protection is adequately provided for.
- **Conflict Resolution Services** – to assist consumers in resolving complaints through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in the marketplace, advisory services and legal representation.

Consumer Rights

- The right to satisfaction of basic needs – the right to