

JOB DESCRIPTION – SENIOR CONSUMER OFFICER

Position	Senior Consumer Officer
Organization	Consumer Council of Fiji
Tenure	3 Years
Duty Station	Suva
Reporting to	Manager – Alternative Dispute Resolution and Consumer Advisory
Salary Band	\$26,576 - \$38,727

1.0 Primary Purpose

To support the Alternative Dispute Resolution and Consumer Advisory Division in addressing consumer concerns and grievances experienced in the marketplace. He/she will ensure that the interests of consumers of goods and services are promoted and protected. He/she will further assist the Manager Alternative Dispute Resolution and Consumer Advisory in the management of the Alternative Dispute Resolution & Consumer Advisory Division.

2.0 Organizational Context of Position

The Consumer Council of Fiji (CCF) is a statutory body established under the Consumer Council of Act 1976 (Cap 235). The Council is expected to play a positive role in achieving a marketplace where consumers are well informed, confident and protected from unlawful, deceptive, misleading or otherwise, objectionable practices. The prime function of the Council is to drive real change for consumers based on these five themes:

- Delivering consumer knowledge, skills and information to all;
- Championing and protecting the interests for all consumers;
- Assist consumers in resolving complaints with traders and service providers;
- Driving change (policy/procedures/practices to benefit consumers);
- Enabling consumers to make responsible choices.

3.0 Council's Role

The Council's roles are to:

- Improve consumers' ability to make informed decisions;
- Solve consumer complaints through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Advisory services and legal representation;
- Advise the Minister on such matters affecting the interests of the consumers;
- Collect, collate and disseminate information in respect of matters affecting the interests of consumers;
- Support or maintain legal proceedings initiated by consumers, where such support is deemed necessary;
- Make representations to the government or to any other persons or organisations on any issues affecting the interests of consumers;
- Conduct research and investigations into matters affecting consumers;

- Provide debt management and consumer credit advisory services to financially illiterate consumers;
- Conduct market surveillance to establish product prices and compliance with product labelling and safety requirements including misrepresentation;
- Work in partnership with local, regional and international organizations to identify and understand emerging consumer issues, conduct research and campaign on issues in solidarity to change local and global practices.

4.0 Responsibilities of the Position

The key accountabilities of the Senior Consumer Officer are:

4.1 Complaints Management

- Oversee the receipt, logging, categorization, and resolution of consumer complaints to ensure timely and efficient redress.
- Assist in handling escalated or complex complaints, ensuring fair and transparent resolution processes.
- Provide consumers with accurate information and advice regarding their rights, available remedies, and applicable regulatory frameworks.
- Coordinate with traders, service providers, and relevant stakeholders to negotiate resolutions for consumer grievances.
- Monitor and evaluate the status of open complaints, ensuring cases are resolved within the set timelines.

4.2 Consumer Advisory Services

- Deliver high-quality advisory services to consumers, empowering them with knowledge of their rights and options for redress.
- Provide tailored guidance to consumers facing specific challenges, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary information to resolve disputes effectively.
- Conduct awareness sessions for consumers on their rights and responsibilities, as well as on emerging consumer issues.

4.3 Mediation Support

- Organizing and facilitating mediation sessions to resolve disputes between consumers and traders/service providers.
- Prepare case summaries and mediation records, ensuring all processes and outcomes are documented accurately.
- Actively participate in mediation sessions, providing expert advice and support to ensure fair resolutions.
- Liaise with stakeholders to build cooperation and trust, improving the effectiveness of mediation processes.

4.4 Data Management and Analysis

- Maintain accurate and updated records of all complaints, advisory services, and mediation cases within the Complaints Management System (CMS).
- Analyze complaint trends and systemic issues, providing insights to support advocacy and service improvement strategies.
- Generate periodic reports on complaints and mediation outcomes for submission to the Manager ADR.

- Utilize data to identify emerging consumer protection issues and recommend proactive solutions.

4.5 Stakeholder Engagement

- Build and maintain strong relationships with traders, service providers, and regulatory agencies to facilitate efficient complaint resolution and collaboration.
- Represent the Council in meetings, workshops, and consultations related to consumer protection and advocacy.
- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to address systemic consumer issues and promote fair trade practices.

4.6 Capacity Building and Team Support

- Provide guidance and mentorship to junior officers, ensuring consistent adherence to the Council's policies and standards.
- Participate in training programs and workshops to enhance knowledge and skills in complaints handling, mediation, and consumer advocacy.
- Support the Manager ADR in identifying opportunities for process improvement within the Division.

4.7 National Consumer Helpline (NCH) Support

- Monitor complaints received through the NCH, ensuring accurate logging and resolution.
- Provide advisory and follow-up support for consumers using the Helpline.
- Collaborate with Helpline staff to identify recurring consumer issues and suggest improvements to service delivery.

The job duties and responsibilities as set out above are not exhaustive and the Post holder may be required to carry out additional duties within the post holder's level of skills and experience.

5.0 Key Selection Criteria

5.1 Qualification

- A Degree in Law and a current legal practicing certificate in Fiji or a Degree in Accounting, Commerce, Business Studies, Finance or equivalent with a Certificate or Diploma in Law.

5.2 Technical Expertise

- At least 2 years of proven work experience in dispute resolution of complex and sensitive issues;
- At least some demonstrated experience in research work is required.
- A commitment to consumer issues and good knowledge of relevant consumer legislations nationally and internationally.
- Must possess excellent IT skills.
- Should have excellent analytical and research skills.
- Knowledge of investigation and research techniques.
- Good understanding of the Consumer Council Act and its statutory functions.

5.3 Key Skills and Competencies

- Demonstrated ability to organise work, manage time, determine priorities and meet deadlines.
- Commitment to social justice and the mission and vision of CCoF.
- Experience in planning and managing research work;

- Excellent communication skills (oral and written).
- Ability to multi-task.
- Good problem-solving attributes.
- Self-Starter, self – organized and motivated.
- Understanding of Council’s obligations to statutory agencies.
- Strategic thinker, innovative performance driven and an effective decision maker.
- Must be professional and ethical.
- Demonstrated ability to work under minimum supervision and heed directives.
- Adheres to the CCoF communication standards, formats, procedures and style.
- Establishes and maintains positive communications with key internal and external partners by seeking input and feedback.
- Shows respect for different attitudes, knowledge and approaches.
- Coordinates own work with that of the team to meet agreed priorities and deadlines.
- Place the team’s agenda before any personal agenda.
- Ensures personal decisions are based on accurate and objective data.
- Considers the positive and negative impacts of decisions before making them.
- Contributes to continuously improve the quality and relevance of information sharing in areas of personal expertise, in support of decision-making processes.
- Keeps abreast of current developments in own area of specialization and brings new ideas to the team.
- Seeks actively to improve programmes and services by continuously exploring future possibilities.
- Treats sensitive or confidential information appropriately.
- Must have integrity and insight suitable for a Senior Consumer Officer.

6.0 Contacts

This position has regular contacts with the following organizations:

- Consumer International (UK)
- Consumer Korea
- VOICE
- Australian Consumers Association (Choice)
- FOMCA
- Government Ministries/Departments
- Relevant Statutory Organizations
- Consumer Network
- Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport
- Commercial Organizations
- Bureau of Statistics
- Fiji Revenue & Customs Services
- Industry Groups and Professional Organisations
- Various Traders and Respondents to complaints
- Other Consumer Protection Agencies.

7.0 Challenges and Impact on Organization Results

The challenges facing the position holder include development of effective communication with the consumers, traders, service providers. It also requires building relationships with other organizations particularly consumer protection agencies, Government ministries and relevant statutory bodies. The incumbent has to develop and maintain knowledge or existing and emerging business practices and how this impact both positively and negatively on consumers.

The appointee needs to be strongly consumer-focused and frequently needs to prioritize and manage multiple tasks/demands set by circumstances. The incumbent is also required to regularly update his/her knowledge and understanding on consumer issues and consumer protection laws/practices. Taking a humble approach in understanding the plight of every consumer (whatever their state of mind and socio-economic background) and rendering the best service possible.

The employee has to develop and maintain knowledge of monopolies and multinational companies to understand the strategies used which may not be fair to the consumers. Other challenges arise from the very tight decision-making deadlines imposed by consumers, respondents and other stakeholders. The incumbent is expected to take a positive approach to these challenges and develop creative/innovative approaches to handle them. Lateral and strategic thinking is often required to come up with effective and achievable approaches. The incumbent needs to be strongly consumer-focused and frequently needs to prioritise and manage multiple tasks/demands set by circumstances.

8.0 Organisation Structure

Immediate supervisor: Manager ADR and Consumer Advisory

Positions Reporting to You	No of Staff Reporting to Them
None	None