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Press Release

www.consumersfiji.org

Supermarket Promotions a Concern

Consumers are urged to beware of misleading advertisements when out for their grocery shopping in Supermarkets.

This call from the Consumer Council of Fiji comes in light of the market surveillances carried out in Labasa on 26 April 2018.

The findings of this survey uncovered a prominent supermarket advertising that “a 4litre Dukes Canola Oil was selling at **\$10.87** and now slashed to special price of **\$10.85**” for the promotion period, 26 – 29 April 2018.

The Council noted, the normal price of \$10.87 is rounded off and the consumer will pay \$10.85 regardless. So in reality there is no special price or discount for consumers as promoted by this Supermarket.

Were consumers to purchase 2 bottles, then they would at least be saving \$0.05 on their purchase.

Another prominent Supermarket was found to have been marking up their normal prices on their Promotional Sale Notices.

In one case, a Supermarket promoted their Punjas 2 kg dhal with the sale notice “was \$3.34 now \$1.55” however the actual shelf price for this product was \$2.26.

Consumers are led to believe by buying the product at \$1.55 they are buying the product half the value of what it was selling for.

The Council acknowledged that upon addressing these issues to the Supermarkets, they amended their promotional notices.

Since 2016, the Council has received 155 complaints worth more than \$191, 931 regarding misleading advertisements. Based on the nature of complaints received, the most common issues were;

- discount prices advertised not reflected at point of sale
- discount prices advertised was the same or more than the normal price of product
- products on sale did not meet specifications as listed by trader
- advertisements not specifying which product(s) were for sale
- traders advertising the sale of a product had limited supply available

The Council has also received complaints of cases where the Supermarket does not immediately remove their promotional sale prices when the promotion ends.

The consumers are bringing the item to be cashed at the special price but are disappointed upon having to pay more because the system has picked up the normal price of that product.

Consumers buying only a few products can instantly notice the difference in prices charged to them and rectify the problem however consumers who buy in bulk are not so fortunate.

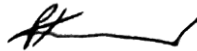
A common excuse that has been given by these supermarkets is human error; they missed amending the special prices to normal prices on their shelves when the promotion ended.

This is no longer tolerable as complaints of such nature have become a norm. This is daylight robbery of consumers' money.

The Council is warning traders to refrain from sale gimmicks and deceptive trading intended to lure consumers into choosing or spend more at their supermarkets.

Consumers are advised not to rush when products are on special in supermarkets, check the product twice before purchase and ensure that the promotions are genuine. Rushed and impulse shopping often results in regrets. Please also keep your receipts.

Should you face issues as such when out shopping, please call our toll free National Consumer Helpline 155 to lodge your complaint.



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Premila Kumar
Chief Executive Officer
Consumer Council of Fiji