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14 May 2018

Press Release

www.consumersfiji.org

Way forward from the withdrawal of DECT and wireless devices

The Consumer Council of Fiji is calling on the Telecommunications Authority of Fiji (TAF) and Telecommunications Fiji Limited (TFL) to come up with a workable solution for customers who were forced to surrender their wireless devices as per TAF instructions.

TAF had called for the surrender of these devices- including wireless modems, wireless cameras, wireless MICS and Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunication (DECT) phones. This was because the devices were interfering with 3G mobile networks.

Consumers who did not surrender these devices by March 27th 2018 faced fines of \$20,000 or an imprisonment term of 24 months.

When the Council enquired with TAF on arrangements for consumers who had legitimately purchased their devices, TAF confirmed that talks were ongoing between the service providers and the Authority for a workable solution.

More than a month has passed since the deadline of both the talks and surrender period, with no solutions provided by TAF and TFL.

Consumers' devices have not been replaced nor have suitable alternative arrangements been made by the service providers or the regulator.

Many of these devices were purchased from the market place in good faith and with hard earned money. Essentially consumers who surrendered the devices without compensation are throwing money away.

The same consumers are now forced to spend again on new handsets and wireless devices.

The Council understands the Authority's need to minimise disruptions to internet connectivity speed and the quality of calls, however, consumers must also be considered.

Consumers purchased the devices without any intent to cause interference, they did so because it was being offered on the market.

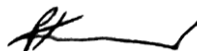
The Consumer Council is also aware of cases where families used cordless or DECT phones because of their disability friendly nature. With these phones, disabled consumers who face difficulty moving were afforded ease of access to their landlines.

By surrendering their devices, these consumers are forced to look for other means of communication from their homes and this is unacceptable.

This withdrawal also deals a huge blow to TFL customers and follows the decommissioning of the TFL CDMA network one month earlier, leaving the customers with the restrictive and immobile choice of connecting to the analogue landline telephones.

Currently wireless devices with the frequency bandwidth 700MHz, 900MHz, 1800MHz, 1900MHz, and 2100MHZ are prohibited from use in Fiji.

Only DECT phones and wireless devices with a frequency bandwidth of 2400 MHz and 5800 MHz are permitted for use.



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Premila Kumar
Chief Executive Officer
Consumer Council of Fiji