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PRESS RELEASE

Consumers to be vigilant when purchasing white goods

The Consumer Council of Fiji is warning consumers to be vigilant and check white goods when intending to purchase these items. They need to be sure that the goods are of merchantable quality and/or fit for its purpose.

With Mother's Day approaching, many consumers may choose to shower their mothers with new products such as ovens, juicers, refrigerators, washing machines and stoves to show their love and appreciation. Not to mention to take advantage of the ongoing sale on variety of products.

Complaints to the Council each year indicate some of the deals on offer may indeed be too good to be true. The Council has registered 242 complaints worth \$220,024 from 2013-2017 regarding white goods not being fit for the purpose. For the first 3 months of 2018, 14 complaints worth \$14,202 have been received by the Council regarding items being defective a few months after purchase, products malfunctioning after the warranty expires, and traders prolonging the redress process.

Consumers must exercise their responsibility by checking the product quality and its terms and conditions. The Council has come across situations where despite assurances of the products longevity, the products did not always function after purchase.

In addition, the Council is aware that some traders decrease the warranty period specified by the manufacturer and prolong the redress process for items that are nearing its warranty expiry.

Traders are reminded to refrain from selling goods that are not of merchantable quality or advertising them as high-end quality items as this is illegal and contrary to the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission Act 2010 and the Sales of Good Act Cap 230. They are required to provide appropriate redress in a timely manner for faulty goods sold to consumers.

In light of this, consumers need to inspect the product to ensure all goods comply with their specifications on paper. They should ask questions if they are not sure about any product and make informed decisions. The Council encourages consumers to also conduct comparative shopping to get the best deals for their hard-earned money.

Consumers may contact the Council's toll free helpline on 155 for advice or complaints.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bindula Devi', written over a horizontal line.

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Bindula Devi
Officer in Charge

Consumer Council of Fiji