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Consumer Council of Fiji



www.consumersfiji.org

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PRESS RELEASE

Report Price Gouging via 155

The Consumer Council of Fiji has seen an increase in complaints from consumers about price gouging for critical items such as hand sanitizers, face masks and now some medications as movement restrictions come into effect.

While the nation is getting together to fight the potentially deadly virus, there are some suppliers and retailers who are taking advantage of the situation and at their best trying to profiteer. This behavior is considered deeply unethical and downright nasty.

Market monitoring by the Council and tip-offs by the consumers have also revealed that some products with deceptive or no labelling have also made their way into the market. Additionally, bogus online retailers have also evolved selling products that might not meet the required safety standards for COVID 19, hence consumers need to be frugal when making online purchases.

While the Council is monitoring prices, we are urging consumers to be our eyes and ears on the ground and report price gouging to help us in making sure businesses behave ethically and prevent them from making a bad situation worse.

“We will follow up with companies that have inflated prices in the wake of the crisis and will work with other appropriate agencies to address particularly egregious cases. However, when reporting price gouging, consumers should include as much information as possible including: the name and address of the merchant, the price and receipt of the item or service, and their names, addresses, and phone numbers so that they can be reached if further information is needed,” said the Council’s Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Seema Shandil.

We are also calling on traders, big and small, as well as online to abstain from price gouging. The Council has a simple message for anyone engaging in price gouging during the coronavirus crisis: “don’t even think about it as we are closely monitoring the market.”

Consumers can call the Council’s toll-free National Consumer helpline on 155 to lodge complaints or report about price gouging.



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