



THURSDAY 24 MAY, 2018

### **Joint Taskforce Undertakes Investigations into the CARE Programmes**

Investigations are well underway regarding issues pertaining to the CARE programmes which have been initiated for post cyclone relief assistance.

A taskforce comprising of staff members from the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission (FCCC) and Consumer Council of Fiji (CCoF) have begun investigating the concerns regarding the manner in which some businesses have responded to the government initiative.

The main objective of the taskforce which is headed by the FCCC CEO Mr. Joel Abraham and CCoF CEO Mrs. Premila Kumar is to ensure that the assistance which is targeted towards the vulnerable victims of natural disasters are not taken advantage of by some unscrupulous traders and businesses.

It has come to light that some traders are taking advantage of the initiatives by hiking prices of items to be sold under the initiative. Further, some traders seem to be accepting payments and asking that be delivered at a later date.

Such claims are now being actively investigated.

FCCC and CCoF have already visited numerous traders and businesses who are engaged under the Homes-Care and Farms-Care initiative and issued them with notice to furnish information to the taskforce which will enable the team to ascertain whether the issues being raised are correct.

**16** traders in the central and western division have been issued with notices with regards to the Homes-Care initiative while **12** businesses involved in the Farms-Care initiative have been issued with similar notices so far.

Those who will be found to be in breach of the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission Act 2010 (FCCC Act 2010) will be taken to task.

Alternatively, the FCCC and CCoF would like to urge consumers to also act responsibly and not abuse the assistance programs initiated by the government. Those who are found to be misusing the Homes-Care initiative and/or providing false and misleading information may be liable for fine of up to \$20,000 or an imprisonment term of up to ten years.