

Consumer Council of Fiji

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PRESS RELEASE

Council queries calls for Taxi Fare Increase

The Consumer Council believes that calls by the Fiji Taxi Association to increase taxi fares by 10cents per 100m will place an unbearable cost on consumers.

And Consumers who cannot meet this cost will be pushed to consider other means of public transport such as buses which will in turn cause taxi drivers to lose out on customers.

It is important to note that the request to increase the price of taxi fares by 10 cents per 100m will have the effect of transforming a fare of \$5 to \$8.50. This increase in the face of decreasing fuel prices cannot be justified.

Previously taxi fare increases were granted with certain conditions which included ongoing training for taxi operators on customer service or behaving properly with customers and general maintenance of their vehicles.

Unfortunately, complaints continue to be registered at the Council over the general condition of some taxis and the attitude of some taxi operators who are rude to passengers, refuse patrons desiring short runs, not having adequate change and not switching on their taxi meters with intention to siphon extra money from passengers.

Indeed the Council has received complaints from Labasa this year of Licensed Taxis who are not using their meters, choosing instead to levy their own charges on passengers for travel. Complaints have also been registered of taxi drivers not honouring the 20 per cent concession given to recipients of social welfare.

Furthermore, price trends in fuel since 2016 are significant detractors to any argument for taxi fare increases.

When the last increase in taxi fares was granted, the price of Motor Spirit was \$2.49. The current price of Motor Spirit is \$2.18. In August 2012 the price of Auto Gas per litre was \$1.98 compared to the current price of \$1.61 per litre.

Since 2012, there have been slight fluctuations in the price of the two commodities. However from 2014 to 2016 there was a sustained drop in the price of both. And though prices have experienced an increase since mid-2016, they are still below 2011 levels.

While the Council acknowledges that the Fiji Taxi Association is within its rights to request an increase, it does not believe that the reasons given by members for this increase are valid.



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