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PRESS RELEASE

**Beware of Online Astrology Shams – Council**

Self-proclaimed astrologers with claims of life altering prowess are rife on social media platforms; with reports that consumers are falling victim to this sham and shelling hundreds of dollars out of their hard-earned cash.

In a recent case which is currently being investigated by the Consumer Council of Fiji (CCoF), an individual, who was facing some personal problems was lured by a Facebook advertisement of an astrologer claiming to have abilities to get rid of the same. The consumer paid \$300 to the astrologer however, when her personal issues were not resolved, she queried with the astrologer who demanded an additional \$1800. The consumer refused and demanded a full refund – a portion of which is still pending.

CCoF Chief Executive Officer Ms Seema Shandil says that scammers like this will only gain credibility and ability to swindle money if consumers remain credulous and believe these ridiculous and unsubstantiated claims.

“We are making it very clear and consumers need to take heed; no self-proclaimed astrologer has the ability to change the course of your life in exchange for money. This is simply a scam meant to prey on the gullible,” stated Ms Shandil.

The Council has also discovered that certain astrology services are being promoted on social media via paid advertising using taglines such as “Marriage problems, business/work problems, money problems” and “Want to get black magic and bad luck removed?”. This shows the level of investment scammers are making and indicates a high level of engagement from consumers.

“Romance scams is already the number one type of scam on social media and now these phony astrology scammers along with naïve consumers are fanning the flames. It is astonishing to see that even in this day and age where information is readily available in relation to imposters, people continue to believe scammers who are not only saying that they can predict the future, but are making fake promises that they have the ability to change people’s fate,” she adds.

The Council is issuing a stark reminder to these imposters that such claims and practices is a breach of the Crimes Act of 2009 and the Council will not only be naming and shaming such phony services but will be referring them to the Fiji Police Force. On the same note, consumers should note that black magic is also illegal and refrain from engaging with individuals claiming to practice the same. Consumers have the ability to make sound decisions themselves, hence should not waste their hard earned on such self-proclaimed astrologers claiming to change their destiny.



@CCoFiji



Consumer Council of Fiji



[www.consumersfiji.org](http://www.consumersfiji.org)



Mobile App

The Council encourages consumers who have been victims or notice such practices to contact the Council on toll-free helpline 155 or email [complaints@consumersfiji.org](mailto:complaints@consumersfiji.org). Alternatively, consumers can lodge complaints via the Consumer Council of Fiji Mobile App.

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**Ms Seema Shandil**

**Chief Executive Officer**