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PRESS RELEASE

Council registers \$1.3 million worth of complaints in 3 months

A stern reminder is being issued for consumers to be cautious and exercise proper due diligence when forking out money from their pockets as we tread into the much-awaited festive season. This reminder comes as the Consumer Council of Fiji noted a 11% increase in complaints registered in the last 3 months (August to October) compared to the same period last year. A total of 1,313 complaints were registered with a monetary value of \$1.3 million.

CCoF CEO Ms. Seema Shandil said that “the notable increase serves as a reminder to consumers that as we enter the festive period, they should remain vigilant at all times, and **“dot all the i's and cross all the t's”** when trusting others with their hard-earned money. It is critical that consumers are cognizant of what is happening in the current marketplace to ensure they are safeguarded from certain traders who are always looking to capitalize on the vulnerability of consumers via unethical means”.

Complaints pertaining to food and drinks were at the top of the list and accounted for 10.8% of the total complaints registered during the period in focus. The Council noted that many traders continued to defy regulations and were found to be selling expired food items, selling priced control items above regulated price and restaurants preparing food in unhygienic conditions.

“Complaints relating to food and drinks is astounding due to the malignancy of its effects on consumers. Issues such as sale of expired and banned products shows a high level of negligence and profiteering behavior. Hence, we are calling on consumers to be extremely vigilant as there is usually a high uptake of certain types of food and drinks during the festive season,” added Ms Shandil.

Other top issues registered at the Council during this period pertained to landlord and tenancy, online shopping and public transport.

Out of the total complaints registered during these 3 months, the Council has successfully resolved 72% of the complaints while investigations, mediations and liaisons with other bodies are being conducted to resolve others. In instances where the respondents were not in favour of providing redress, the cases have been escalated to other enforcement bodies for further action.

“It is astonishing to see that despite difficult economic times and heavy deterrents with respect to such unethical practices, certain traders continue to shell out as much as they can from members of the public. Let me make it very clear, the Council does not condone any unethical practice and it will not hesitate to name those individuals or traders who fail in their responsibility of maintaining a fair marketplace for all,” added Ms. Shandil.



@CCoFiji



Consumer Council of Fiji



www.consumersfiji.org



Mobile App

The Council will continue to work with different enforcement bodies to ensure unethical and unscrupulous businesses are held accountable.

Consumers who continue to face issues in the marketplace can call us on toll-free helpline 155 or email complaints@consumersfiji.org. Alternatively, they can lodge complaints via the Consumer Council of Fiji Mobile App.

Consumers can also message us directly through our various social media platforms by following Consumer Council on Fiji on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok.

Seema Shandil
Chief Executive Officer
Consumer Council of Fiji