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PRESS RELEASE

Over 50% of businesses non-compliant – Council

Regular market surveillance, spot checks and trader/service visits by the Consumer Council of Fiji (CCoF) over the past 3 months (November 2022 to January 2023) has revealed that the overall market compliance to consumer protection laws stands at 48% (out of the 317 businesses inspected).

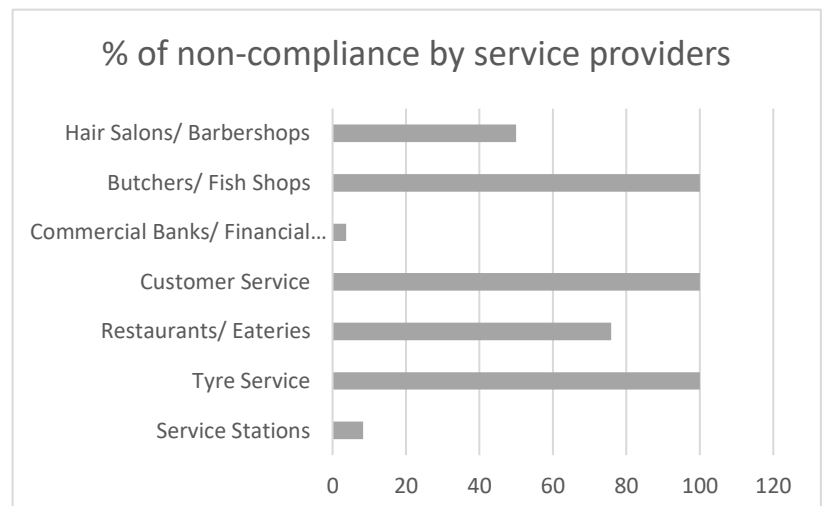
Whilst announcing the market compliance data, CCoF Chief Executive Officer Ms Seema Shandil said that during the height of festivities when consumers were engaging in increased spending; certain businesses used this opportunity to profiteer; breaching consumer protection laws in the process.

“In a nutshell, the compliance data is telling us that out of every 2 businesses consumers engaged with, it is highly probable that one of them was non-compliant; which is directly proportional to breaching consumer rights. This is simply baffling,” stated Ms Shandil.

Out of the overall business market compliance which stood at 48% (includes both retailers/traders and service providers), the compliance rate for traders/retailers (supermarkets, pharmacies and other retail stores) was 55% whilst the compliance rate for service providers (banks, service stations, salons, postal services and other businesses dealing with services) was 43%.

“The above data informs us that not only are consumers being provided shoddy, substandard and unmerchantable products, they are also being subjected to poor service delivery in the service sector,” highlighted Ms Shandil.

Meanwhile, during the same period the Council issued 144 warning letters to





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Mobile App

traders and service providers; calling for immediate action to comply with the relevant consumer protection laws. The Council has already started follow-up visits and repeat offenders will be referred for stringent enforcement actions. During the period in question, the Council referred 107 businesses to enforcement bodies for continuous or gross breach of consumer protection laws and consumer rights.

“In relation to traders of goods, the highest level of non-compliance can be seen in retail shops and canteens with 90%; with breach of price control order, sale of expired goods, retailing loose cigarettes, increasing prices of goods at night, misleading advertisements, not displaying price tags and placing exorbitant charges for use of mobile money,” stated Ms. Shandil.

The Council is reassuring consumers that we will work closely with relevant enforcement agencies to iron out these issues and continuously push for stringent enforcement actions to ensure an increase in the level of compliance by traders and service providers.

Consumers who feel they have been hard done by traders or notice other unethical practices can contact the Consumer Council on our toll-free number 155 or lodge their complaints using the Council’s mobile app.

Seema Shandil
Chief Executive Officer