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Consumer Council of Fiji



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PRESS RELEASE

The Deceitful Landlady: Consumers Alerted of Residential Rental Scam

Consumers are being alerted to refrain from making residential bond and rental payment without verifying if they are dealing with the real property owner or an authorized agent. This alert is being issued after the discovery of a residential rental scam being orchestrated by a woman in Suva who falsely claims to offer flats for rent and collects payments, from unsuspecting consumers.

According to multiple reports received by the Council, the woman has been approaching people in the Suva area, claiming that she has flats available for rent. She has been taking advance payment from vulnerable individuals, promising that the property will be available once a payment of \$600 bond and \$600 advance rent is paid.

After receiving payment from consumers, the individual comes up with various delaying tactics such as; ‘the flat needs more renovation’ or ‘the existing tenants are still on the premises.’ After intervention from the Council, only one complainant has been given a refund after months of being given the run-around, and many more complainants await restitution.

CCoF Chief Executive Officer Ms Seema Shandil is advising the public to exercise caution and do their due diligence before handing over any money to anyone claiming to offer rental properties.

“Always verify the authenticity of the property owner and the legitimacy of the property before making any payment and retain receipts as proof of payments. If someone you are dealing with claims to be a real estate agent, always request for valid photo ID to confirm the same. Consumers need to become more inquisitive and ask the right questions to ensure they are not swindled by such crooks,” advises Shandil.

The Council is also urging anyone who has been a victim of this scam or has information about the scammer to come forward and report the matter to the nearest Police Station or to the Consumer Council of Fiji.

For further information, please contact the Consumer Council of Fiji on 155 or email complaints@consumersfiji.org. Alternatively, complaints can also be lodged via the Consumer Council mobile app.



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Ms Seema Shandil
Chief Executive Officer