

JOB DESCRIPTION – SENIOR CONSUMER OFFICER

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| Position | Senior Consumer Officer |
| Organization | Consumer Council of Fiji |
| Tenure | 3 Years |
| Duty Station | Suva |
| Reporting to | Manager – Alternative Dispute Resolution and Consumer Advisory |
| Salary | \$26,576 - \$38,727 |

1.0 Primary Purpose

To support the Alternative Dispute Resolution and Consumer Advisory Division in addressing consumer concerns and grievances experienced in the marketplace. He/she will ensure that the interests of consumers of goods and services are promoted and protected. He/she will further assist the Manager Alternative Dispute Resolution and Consumer Advisory in the management of the Alternative Dispute Resolution & Consumer Advisory Division.

2.0 Organizational Context of Position

The Consumer Council of Fiji (CCF) is a statutory body established under the Consumer Council Act (Cap 235). The Council is expected to play a positive role in achieving a marketplace where consumers are well informed, confident and protected from unlawful, deceptive, misleading or otherwise, objectionable practices. The prime function of the Council is to drive real change for consumers based on these five themes:

- Delivering consumer knowledge, skills and information to all;
- Championing and protecting the interests for all consumers;
- Assist consumers in resolving complaints with traders and service providers;
- Driving change (policy/procedures/practices to benefit consumers);
- Enabling consumers to make responsible choices.

3.0 Council’s Role

The Council’s roles are to:

- Improve consumers’ ability to make informed decisions;
- Solve consumer complaints through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Advisory services and legal representation;
- Advise the Minister on such matters affecting the interests of the consumers;
- Collect, collate and disseminate information in respect of matters affecting the interests of consumers;
- Support or maintain legal proceedings initiated by consumers, where such support is deemed necessary;
- Make representations to the government or to any other persons or organisations on any issues affecting the interests of consumers;
- Conduct research and investigations into matters affecting consumers;

- Provide debt management and consumer credit advisory services to financially illiterate consumers;
- Conduct market surveillance to establish product prices and compliance with product labelling and safety requirements including misrepresentation;
- Work in partnership with local, regional and international organizations to identify and understand emerging consumer issues, conduct research and campaign on issues in solidarity to change local and global practices.

4.0 Responsibilities of the Position

The key accountabilities of the Senior Consumer Officer are:

4.1 Complaints Handling and Advisory Support

- Resolving complaints with traders and service providers.
- Conduct mediation settlements with relevant parties.
- Provide advisory services to consumers on complaints/issues.
- Make referral of complaints to the relevant authorities for enforcement.
- If ADR fails, assist consumers in preparation of cases that could be best heard and resolved before the Small Claims Tribunal (SCT).
- Arrange and facilitate, including representation, lodgement and hearing of cases as scheduled by the SCT.
- Attend to case referral inwards and outwards and monitor outcome.
- Advise consumers of positive or negative outcome of complaints and provide options preferable to resolve complaints or referring cases to relevant authorities.
- Ensure conclusion of all closed or resolved complaints/cases and issue closure letters accordingly.
- Monitor the Complaints Management System on a daily basis and highlight the recurring consumer issues.
- Provide case studies and statistics of a particular issue in need of reform, policy change or action taken to stop repeated abuse.
- Assisting with any other duties as assigned by the Manager of Chief Executive Officer.

4.2 Research and Awareness Raising Support

- Gather information and assist in preparing submissions and developing issues paper where necessary on complaints/issues received.
- Carry out relevant field research, data processing, data analysis work and write reports on market surveillance and price surveys.
- Assist in developing research proposals
- Draft Press Releases on emerging and recurring issues
- Assist in providing social media posts and keeping record of information posted online.
- Provide assistance in the implementation of donor funded projects and other projects agreed with regional and international partners.
- Assist in developing and mounting awareness-raising on key consumer issues.

4.3 Work Programme and Reporting

- Assist with developing or reviewing and implementing relevant policies and Standard Operating Procedures for the Division.

- Assist in developing and maintaining a user – friendly and up – to – date database as and when required.
- Assist with the development and implementation of the Division’s Work Plan and Business Plan annually.
- Assist with preparing the Monthly and quarterly reports.

4.4 Performance Management and Capacity Building

- Assist in ensuring effective and efficient management of human, financial and physical resources within the Division.
- Assist in ensuring effective succession planning and skills development within the Division.
- Assist with the training requirements of the staff in the division.
- Assist in coordinating the day-to-day activities of interns and volunteers attached to the Division.

The job duties and responsibilities as set out above are not exhaustive and the Post holder may be required to carry out additional duties within the post holder’s level of skills and experience.

5.0 Key Selection Criteria

5.1 Qualification

- A Degree in Law and a current legal practicing certificate in Fiji or a Degree in Accounting, Commerce, Business Studies, Finance or equivalent with a Certificate or Diploma in Law..

5.2 Technical Expertise

- At least 2 years of proven work experience in dispute resolution of complex and sensitive issues;
- At least some demonstrated experience in research work is required.
- A commitment to consumer issues and good knowledge of relevant consumer legislations nationally and internationally.
- Must possess excellent IT skills.
- Should have excellent analytical and research skills.
- Knowledge of investigation and research techniques.
- Good understanding of the Consumer Council Act and its statutory functions.

5.3 Key Skills and Competencies

- Demonstrated ability to organise work, manage time, determine priorities and meet deadlines.
- Commitment to social justice and the mission and vision of CCoF.
- Experience in planning and managing research work;
- Excellent communication skills (oral and written).
- Ability to multi-task.
- Good problem solving attributes.
- Self-Starter, self – organized and motivated.
- Understanding of Council’s obligations to statutory agencies.
- Strategic thinker, innovative performance driven and an effective decision maker.
- Must be professional and ethical.
- Demonstrated ability to work under minimum supervision and heed directives.
- Adheres to the CCoF communication standards, formats, procedures and style.

- Establishes and maintains positive communications with key internal and external partners by seeking input and feedback.
- Shows respect for different attitudes, knowledge and approaches.
- Coordinates own work with that of the team to meet agreed priorities and deadlines.
- Place the team's agenda before any personal agenda.
- Ensures personal decisions are based on accurate and objective data.
- Considers the positive and negative impacts of decisions before making them.
- Contributes to continuously improve the quality and relevance of information sharing in areas of personal expertise, in support of decision-making processes.
- Keeps abreast of current developments in own area of specialization and brings new ideas to the team.
- Seeks actively to improve programmes and services by continuously exploring future possibilities.
- Treats sensitive or confidential information appropriately.
- Must have integrity and insight suitable for a Senior Consumer Officer.

6.0 Contacts

This position has regular contacts with the following organizations:

- Consumer International (UK)
- Consumer Korea
- VOICE
- Australian Consumers Association (Choice)
- FOMCA
- Government Ministries/Departments
- Relevant Statutory Organizations
- Consumer Network
- Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport
- Commercial Organizations
- Bureau of Statistics
- Fiji Revenue & Customers Services
- Industry Groups and Professional Organisations
- Various Traders and Respondents to complaints
- Other Consumer Protection Agencies.

7.0 Challenges and Impact on Organization Results

The challenges facing the position holder include development of effective communication with the consumers, traders, service providers. It also requires building relationships with other organizations particularly consumer protection agencies, Government ministries and relevant statutory bodies. The incumbent has to develop and maintain knowledge or existing and emerging business practices and how these impact both positively and negatively on consumers.

The appointee needs to be strongly consumer-focused and frequently needs to prioritize and manage multiple tasks/demands set by circumstances. The incumbent is also required to regularly update his/her knowledge and understanding on consumer issues and consumer protection laws/practices. Taking a

humble approach in understanding the plight of every consumer (whatever their state of mind and socio economic background) and rendering the best service possible.

The employee has to develop and maintain knowledge of monopolies and multinational companies to understand the strategies used which may not be fair to the consumers. Other challenges arise from the very tight decision-making deadlines imposed by consumers, respondents and other stakeholders. The incumbent is expected to take a positive approach to these challenges and develop creative/innovative approaches to handle them. Lateral and strategic thinking is often required to come up with effective and achievable approaches. The incumbent needs to be strongly consumer-focused and frequently needs to prioritise and manage multiple tasks/demands set by circumstances.

8.0 Organisation Structure

Immediate supervisor: Manager ADR and Consumer Advisory

| Positions Reporting To You | No of Staff Reporting To Them |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| None | None |

CONSUMER COUNCIL OF FIJI – ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

