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Consumer Council of Fiji



www.consumersfiji.org

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PRESS RELEASE

Top 10 Consumer Complaints Revealed

An analysis of complaints in the financial year 2022-2023 (August 2022 to July 2023) has revealed the ten major areas of concern for consumers in Fiji, portraying the intricate challenges individuals face across various different categories. These encompass concerns regarding landlords and tenants, food and beverage, online shopping, public transportation, misleading advertisements/prices, and construction and electronics. Throughout this period, the Council registered a total of 4880 complaints, representing a combined value exceeding \$5.5 million dollars – an increase of 12% when compared to the previous financial year.

Unfortunately, disputes between landlords and tenants continues to be the leading issue, with a staggering 534 complaints—1 in every 10 complaints received at the Council. Tenants across Fiji continued to face issues such as landlords refusing to refund bond, illegal disconnection of utilities, illegal eviction notices, increasing rent despite the rent freeze in place, not issuing tenancy agreements and even failing to issue receipts for rent paid. Additionally, the Council registered 499 complaints related to food and drinks, which included complaints about issues with expiry dates on items, rotten food and bad restaurant hygiene amongst others.

As e-commerce continues to grow, the Council noted 285 complaints linked to online shopping. These touch on matters of delivery, product quality, and fraudulent activities - underlining the importance of building trust in online transactions. Public transport issues garnered 256 complaints, revealing the pressing need for public transport operators to adhere to service schedules, charging correct fares and providing quality customer service. Similarly, 209 complaints were received concerning faulty household electronic goods, emphasizing the importance of not only quality products but accessible repairs and dependable products in this category.

Misleading advertisements and promotions led to 173 complaints, while 44 complaints pertained to mobile products. Hardware issues, construction industry concerns, and electronic and computer services generated 126, 125, and 124 complaints respectively, making them integral areas of consumer discontent.

Consumer Council of Fiji CEO Seema Shandil, has expressed deep concern over the notable increase in complaints. “The surge in consumer complaints is a clear call to action for all stakeholders to collaborate in creating a market environment that prioritizes transparency and accountability. We also acknowledge and thank our consumers for bringing these matters to

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light, which is a clear indicator that they are already working in solidarity to safeguard their rights. Nonetheless, as the foremost consumer advocacy body in Fiji, we will continue to fight for consumer rights, and this includes taking proactive measures like public naming and shaming of traders who routinely breach consumer rights,” Shandil says.

The Consumer Council of Fiji calls upon businesses, service providers, and relevant authorities to take these complaints seriously and proactively engage in initiatives that uphold consumer interests. Consumers who wish to lodge a complaint are welcome to contact the Councils national toll-free line 155, or email complaints@consumersfiji.org.

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