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PRESS RELEASE

### **Breached Contracts & Subpar Services by Certain Driving Schools**

Consumers are being alerted to conduct proper research, request for agreements and ensure clear terms and conditions when engaging with driving schools. This is after a number of complaints alleging breached contracts, unprofessional behaviour, and incomplete services by "dubious players" who are tarnishing the industry's reputation.

Consumers have reported a concerning range of issues, including driving schools failing to deliver the contracted number of lessons, instructors exhibiting rude and unprofessional behaviour, arbitrary cancellations and rescheduling of lessons causing inconvenience and disruption. Consumers have also reported instances of bait-and-switch tactics, where driving schools accept payments for manual license lessons but provide lessons for automatic licenses instead, or unexpectedly request additional fees mid-course. Coupled with unresponsive communication channels, these practices leave consumers feeling frustrated and uninformed.

The seriousness of the situation is further highlighted by specific cases currently under investigation by the Council. A driving school in Suva has garnered 4 complaints since last month, alleging a lack of contracts, inconsistent punctuality for lessons, shortened lesson durations, and poor communication. Additionally, six complaints were lodged against another school last year for accepting payments but failing to provide any services or communication, prompting referral to the Land Transport Authority for enforcement action.

These concerning trends are further supported by 49 complaints documented by the Council since 2021, revealing a pattern of last-minute cancellations, rescheduling, and communication issues within the driving school industry.

The Council remains committed to protecting consumer rights and holding businesses accountable. CEO Seema Shandil emphasized, "Consumers have the right to expect transparency, professionalism, and reliability when engaging with driving schools. The reported cases of misconduct, including incomplete services and unprofessional behaviour, are clear violations of consumer rights."

Whilst the Council is working towards holding these few notorious driving school's accountable, by thoroughly researching driving schools, consumers can gather information about their reputation, track record, and the quality of services offered. Additionally, consumers are encouraged to request written agreements that outline the terms and conditions of the driving lessons, including the number of lessons, schedule, fees, and cancellation policies. Clear communication and understanding of these terms are essential to avoid misunderstandings and protect consumer rights.



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While acknowledging that the majority of driving schools operate ethically and provide quality services, the Council urges the few problematic players to adhere to ethical practices and uphold consumer rights.

The Council encourages consumers who encounter issues with driving schools or any other service providers to report their experiences via the toll-free number 155 or email [complaints@consumersfiji.org](mailto:complaints@consumersfiji.org). By reporting misconduct and unethical behaviour, consumers can contribute to a safer, more professional driving school industry in Fiji.

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**Ms Seema Shandil**

**Chief Executive Officer**