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PRESS RELEASE

Don't Be Fooled! New Alert to Expose Fake Astrology Money Traps

Fraudsters posing as astrologers and divine healers continue to exploit consumers for financial gain across Fiji. Despite previous warnings, the Consumer Council of Fiji is aware of individuals who operate businesses under the false pretense of possessing supernatural abilities, promising to resolve financial, relationship, and personal problems while preying on the vulnerabilities of others. However, as expected, these predatory fraudsters not only fail to deliver on their promises but often leave their victims in an even worse situation—both financially and emotionally.

In a recent tip-off received by the Council, an astrologer took advantage of a family's fears and superstitions, coercing them into paying over \$10,000. By exploiting their insecurities, he created doubt and division within the family, ultimately preventing a marriage from taking place. What should have been a joyous occasion, filled with hope and new beginnings, was instead overshadowed by deception, leaving the family to face a cloud of uncertainty and emotional turmoil.

“Scammers who take advantage of cultural and personal beliefs to manipulate families are a serious concern. Not only do these actions cause financial loss, but they also create emotional turmoil and destroy relationships. It is disturbing to see that such deceitful practices continue to exist, exploiting people’s fears and insecurities. Consumers must not fall into this trap and should make decisions based on logic and verified facts, not superstition,” stated Consumer Council of Fiji Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Seema Shandil.

The Council conducted an investigation under an alias, making a mystery call to the same astrologer while providing a fake name and date of birth when seeking assistance. Despite these fabricated details, the astrologer proceeded to make alarming predictions, warning of impending calamities such as, *"There is misfortune in your destiny,"* and *"You are about to suffer."* His modus operandi became clear—he preys on fear, convincing clients that only his exclusive and costly "special treatment" can shield them from disaster. Shockingly, he quoted a fee of \$12,000 for his supposed services, completely failing to realize that the information provided was false.

Head Office

Level 5 Vanua House
Victoria Parade GPO, Suva
Phone: 3300792/3310183
CEO: 3305864
Fax: 3300115
Email: complaints@consumersfiji.org

Lautoka/West

Suite 4 Popular Building
Vidilo Street
P.O. Box 5396, Lautoka
Phone: 6664987
Email: consumerlwk@connect.com.fj

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: colbs@connect.com.fj



@CCoFiji



Consumer Council of Fiji



www.consumersfiji.org



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“This is absolutely hilarious,” remarked Ms. Shandil. “If this so-called astrologer was truly capable of foreseeing events, how did he fail to recognize that the details given were fake? Consumers should stay alert and not be easily deceived—these are scammers, clear and simple.”

The Council is also issuing a stern warning to these fraudsters. The Council will not only expose such fraudulent services but will also refer them to the Fiji Police Force for further investigation and potential prosecution. “Consumers should think twice before trusting these fraudsters and handing over their hard-earned money. The only thing these scammers are good at is exploiting vulnerability and running off with cash.

Consumers who have encountered or fallen victim to such scams are encouraged to report these incidents to the Council by calling the Toll-free helpline 155 or emailing complaints@consumersfiji.org.

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