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PRESS RELEASE

URGENT PUBLIC ALERT: Shelf Prices vs. Checkout Prices in Supermarkets

With Christmas just a few days away and shopping activity intensifying this weekend, the Consumer Council of Fiji is issuing an urgent public alert to all shoppers regarding a concerning trend observed in supermarkets nationwide.

Recent surveillance conducted across multiple supermarkets has revealed frequent discrepancies between shelf prices and checkout prices. Items displayed with marked-down or promotional prices on shelves are often scanned at the checkout at higher, original prices. As a result, consumers do not receive the advertised discount unless they identify the error and raise it with cashiers. Shoppers who are in a rush and fail to check their receipts may unknowingly pay more than anticipated, missing out on the savings they expected when selecting discounted items.

The issue is particularly evident with products nearing expiry or fruits and vegetables or on promotional products, which are often displayed separately with discounted prices. In many cases, cashiers are required to manually override the system to apply the correct price. While some retailers may attribute these discrepancies to human error, the Consumer Council notes that the repeated and widespread nature of these mismatches raises serious questions about whether these practices are deliberate.

Commenting on the findings, the CEO of the Consumer Council of Fiji stated, “While consumers are ready to pay the price clearly displayed on the shelf, retailers should also be fully aware of their responsibility to ensure pricing accuracy, especially during peak festive shopping periods. The recurring mismatch between shelf prices and checkout prices cannot simply **be dismissed as mistakes**. The pattern we are observing raises concerns that **these practices may be deliberate, and this is deeply unacceptable**. Shoppers must be able to trust that promotional and marked-down prices are accurate and enforced at the point of sale.”

During busy shopping periods, even small differences between shelf prices and checkout prices can add up quickly, resulting in significant financial loss for consumers purchasing multiple items. With festive shopping activity at its peak, families and households are particularly vulnerable to being overcharged, often without noticing until after leaving the store.

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Consumer Council of Fiji



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Mobile App

The Consumer Council urges all shoppers to carefully check prices at the cash register before completing payment and to review receipts immediately. Any discrepancies should be raised with store management and reported to the Consumer Council. Retailers must recognize that accurate pricing is not optional, and failure to ensure this undermines consumer trust and the fairness of the marketplace.

The Council will continue to closely monitor supermarkets throughout the festive season and beyond to safeguard consumers against unfair pricing practices. Shoppers are encouraged to stay vigilant and ensure that every item they purchase is accurately priced, helping to make the festive shopping experience fair, transparent, and trustworthy. Any concerns can be reported through our National Consumer Helpline at 155 or via email at complaints@consumersfiji.org.

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