

28 August 2026

PRESS RELEASE

Consumer Council Raises Red Flag Over Unscrupulous Vehicle Dealer Blaming Consumers for Defective Cars

Motor vehicle buyers are being alerted to exercise extreme caution when purchasing vehicles from dealers who are not authorized dealers and backup service providers. This urgent alert comes after an unscrupulous motor vehicle dealer selling brand-new vehicles across multiple brands and makes, was flagged for systematically deflecting responsibility onto frustrated buyers when their vehicles failed on the road.

Since 2020, at least 26 consumers have been taken for a ride by this particular dealer, accumulating a high volume of complaints with the Council. Investigative findings reveal a troubling, recurring pattern: the dealer lacks both the technical expertise and the necessary spare parts to service or repair the vehicles they sell. Rather than taking accountability for their inability to provide adequate after-sales support, the dealer routinely blames buyers for the malfunctions and leaves them stranded with non-functional vehicles and no viable recourse.

"Consumers are paying substantial amounts for vehicles under the reasonable expectation of reliability and proper after-sales service," said Consumer Council of Fiji CEO Seema Shandil. "It is entirely unacceptable for a dealer to offload defective inventory, lack the basic capacity to repair what they sell, and then blame the customer when things go wrong."

Recent cases brought before the Council highlight the severity of the issue. In one instance, a consumer purchased a firm-out 2018 Twin Cabin for \$66,888, only for the clutch system to fail shortly after. An independent mechanical inspection revealed that the clutch system had been fitted with second-hand parts. Despite repeated notifications, the dealer offered no redress or meaningful assistance. In another case, a consumer sought a replacement or full refund for a brand new 2025 SUV purchased for FJD \$87,800 after it suffered water leakage, overheating, and major engine failure. While the dealer repaired the vehicle under warranty, they maintained that the damage stemmed from driver negligence. Following the intervention of the Council to seek an objective resolution addressing the buyer's loss of confidence in the vehicle's safety and reliability, the dealer maintains that the car is fully repaired and its obligations are met, leaving the core dispute over product defect versus driver misuse unresolved.

To make matters worse, the Council notes that the dealership staff are remarkably rude and completely unequipped to de-escalate aggrieved customers.

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: RC.ltk@consumersfiji.org

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: RC.lbs@consumersfiji.org



@CCoFiji



Consumer Council of Fiji



www.consumersfiji.org



Mobile App

The Council reminds all dealers, that consumers possess the right to redress and quality, entitling them to reliable products and proper remedies when a vehicle fails to meet acceptable standards. While consumers have actively fulfilled their responsibility to report defects promptly, the dealer has continuously failed to honor warranty commitments or deliver acceptable after-sales support.

To avoid falling victim to similar practices, the Consumer Council strongly advises the public to exercise heightened due diligence when purchasing vehicles, particularly newly imported brands or those without an established track record in Fiji. Additionally, consumers can check with the Council for any past complaints against a dealer or brand to help gauge reliability and service expectations.

Before finalizing any vehicle purchase, consumers must actively verify that the dealership possesses qualified technicians specifically trained to repair that specific make and model. Buyers are urged to ask direct questions and demand clear assurance regarding the local availability of genuine spare parts and backup servicing. Furthermore, consumers should carefully inspect all warranty terms to ensure that repair commitments and dispute resolution procedures are clearly documented in writing prior to making any payment.

Consumers experiencing similar issues with motor vehicle dealers are urged to report their complaints to the Consumer Council of Fiji via the toll-free line **155** or by emailing complaints@consumersfiji.org.

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: RC.ltk@consumersfiji.org

Labasa/North

Shop 2, Mudaliar Investment
Sangam Avenue Street
P.O. Box 64, Labasa
Phone: 8812559
Email: RC.lbs@consumersfiji.org