



FRIDAY 01 JUNE, 2018

## **Some Traders Involved Under the Homes-Care and Farms- Care Initiatives Likely to be Charged**

Investigations have commenced in the Western Division regarding issues pertaining to the Homes- Care and Farms-Care initiatives and a team is now actively looking into these. The team will be on the field throughout the weekend.

During the course of the investigations, certain traders have been identified to be contravening provisions of the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission Act 2010 (FCCC Act 2010). This includes unconscionable conduct, false and misleading representation and special investigators have been engaged to prepare and file charges in the courts.

The team is also visiting communities in order to speak with the people who have been purchasing items under the Homes-Care and Farms-Care initiatives and the issues which they have been facing.

Fijians are responding well to investigations by cooperating and providing information and the investigating team has experienced an influx of complaints as such the taskforce will be adding 15 new personnel to assist in investigations.

The preliminary findings of the team include traders taking advantage of the initiatives by hiking prices of items to be sold under the initiative, traders accepting payments and asking for the items to be delivered at a later date giving delivery time of up to six weeks whereas the normal delivery time would have been around one week. This is contrary to their agreement with the Ministry of Economy, as payments should be received if stocks are available.

Also, some traders are providing false information to the CARE programme recipients that if the funds in the cards are not utilised by a certain date, government will take the money back.

With the information at hand, it is likely that some traders engaged under the Homes- Care and Farms – Care initiatives will be charged for possible breaches under the FCCC Act 2010.

The taskforce would like to advise recipients of the CARE programmes to not swipe their cards if the items are not in stock. The Homes- Care initiative will be on-going till 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2018, hence consumers should not rush and make payments in advance.

Similar activity will be undertaken in the Northern Division from next week.

The main objective of the team which is headed by the FCCC CEO Mr. Joel Abraham and CCoF CEO Mrs. Premila Kumar is to ensure that the assistance which is targeted towards the vulnerable Fijians are not taken advantage of by some unscrupulous traders and businesses.

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