



PRESS RELEASE

FCCC TO CONDUCT GROUND INSPECTIONS POST RECENT FLOODING

FRIDAY 20 APRIL 2018

The Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission (FCCC) will be mobilising a team in the western division for a week to undertake inspections of traders and businesses to ensure their compliance to the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission Act 2010 (FCCC Act 2010). The inspections will be done in the areas affected by the recent floods caused by Tropical cyclone Josie and Keni to minimise the chances of unethical market practices.

From Monday 23 April, 2018 till Friday 27 April, 2018 a team from the Central division will be conducting price inspections, monitoring and simultaneously conducting trader awareness in Sigatoka, Nadi, Lautoka, Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki.

It has been noted in the past that post natural disasters, the prices for goods and/or services increase whereby businesses seem to hike sale price to cover loss and/or shortage of supply. The FCCC has also noted that some businesses try to recover their losses by selling off the flood affected goods to unsuspecting consumers, without clearly disclosing that the goods were affected by natural disaster. Businesses may engage in such actions with a view to maximize their profit while ensuring to recover the loss, however, in doing so, people, particularly those less fortunate, struggle to make ends meet.

The members of the public have often voiced their concerns via social media and media outlets regarding traders tremendously increasing prices of items sold in the shops post natural disasters such as cyclones and hurricanes.

FCCC through this proactive measure intends to ensure that despite the situation at hand, traders do not breach the law provisions in place by engaging in unethical acts.

FCCC will be inspecting prices of items under price control to ensure traders are in compliance. The list of items under price control need to be sold at the respective authorised prices. Natural

disasters do not mean that the prices of basic food items, particularly those controlled by FCCC can be hiked.

Further, traders will be informed to avoid profiteering and price gouging. While FCCC's role is not to stop price increases which occur following supply constraints caused by natural disaster such as cyclones, rather, it is to ensure that businesses do not make misleading claims when they attribute any price increases to such situation in a bid to artificially raise prices. The conduct of misleading and deceiving consumers is contrary to Section 75 of the FCCC Act 2010.

Where such conduct occurs, the FCCC has the power to issue warning notices, infringement notices, impose penalties of up to \$50,000.00 and Prosecute traders accordingly.

The FCCC is of the view that such an initiative will boost trader confidence in doing business ethically which will eradicate and minimize unfair trade practices. The initiative is also in line with FCCC's 'Strategic Goal 2' which is "ensuring that all Fijians are offered goods and services that are safe and are provided with adequate and accurate information about the goods and services".

Similar activity will be undertaken in the northern division in May, 2018.

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