



PRESS RELEASE

STATEMENT FROM THE CEO

WEDNESDAY 05 SEPTEMBER 2018

The Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission (FCCC) is an independent statutory body and it is our job to ensure there is fair competition in the market so that consumers are granted the most affordable prices possible and have access to a wide selection of goods in the marketplace. The FCCC also monitors price controlled items and has been imbued with new authority to combat monopolistic practices from wholesalers and retailers in Fiji.

I regularly respond to queries from the public and offer my analysis to ensure consumers have complete and accurate information when operating in the marketplace. It's the job of the FCCC to find measured, market-based solutions to protect Fijian consumers and create competition to bring down prices; to do so we are guided by the facts, not by politics. It's how the FCCC has helped guide the Fijian marketplace to its place of strength today and it is how we are responsibly working to ensure fair prices across the economy and protect Fijian consumers from unscrupulous business practices.

That's why I completely stand by my response to a concerned member of the public when I said it would take a magical formula to immediately reduce the cost of all food products in Fiji by 20percent. My comment spoke to the lack of economic understanding behind the question: it would be impossible to implement such a radical and unrealistic policy without grinding the Fijian economy to a halt and forcing many Fijian businesses to close their doors.

Following that response, I was very surprised to see a statement from the National Federation Party (NFP) attacking me and the FCCC, given I never once mentioned any political party. I was even more surprised to see the statement reference, the NFP's political agenda relating to VAT and duty concessions, given I never mentioned either in my response. Besides, it only takes a

basic knowledge of market economics to understand that VAT and duty concessions alone cannot possibly affect a 20 per cent decrease in all food prices.

While the NFP is free to find ways to educate the public on their political agenda, baseless attacks against the FCCC are not the way to do it. I strongly urge them to adopt the same commitments to integrity and to honest and transparent communication with the public that we proudly uphold at the FCCC.

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