



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FCCC Warns Against Raising Prices During Coronavirus Emergency Tuesday 17 March 2020**

The Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission (FCCC) will take strong action against any traders who intend to increase prices of essential items for Fijian consumers during this emergency period.

“We will be cracking down on any trader who tries to take advantage of Fijians by price-gouging on items like face masks and hand sanitiser,” said FCCC CEO, Joel Abraham.

Abraham has urged Fijians not to panic buy, but instead, make an emergency plan and be prepared.

“The idea of COVID-19 spreading can be quite scary and panic can easily become prevalent among Fijians. We urge Fijians to avoid panicking and panic buying as it will only make matters worse. The best thing to do is to ensure you have an emergency plan for you and your family and adhere to all advisories by our hardworking medical teams and the Fijian Government,” he said.

“FCCC is currently undertaking a market assessment on the supply and understanding of supply disruption when it happens. We need to approach this from a balanced viewpoint.”

Price gouging is the practice of raising prices on certain types of goods and services to an unfair level, especially during a state of emergency.

This situation is especially of concern when it comes to pharmaceutical products as the majority of medicine in Fiji is imported.

In order to aid with these concerns, FCCC will be collaborating with the Fiji Pharmaceutical Society to see if items can be rationed according to the severity of need.

FCCC has met with stakeholders, fuel companies, Grocers Association and the Chamber of Commerce to note potential market impacts as well as prepare strategies in the event that a case of COVID-19 arises.

“The upcoming COVID-19 Response supplementary budget coming up on March 26 will help alleviate pressure and we will be looking at other policy measures to reduce any impact.”

FCCC is an independent statutory authority whose role is to promote competition, promote fair trade, regulate prices in markets where competition is lessened or limited, and regulate monopolistic market situations including national infrastructure for the benefit of all Fijians.

**For more information/details on Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission and FCCC Act 2010, visit the website on <http://www.fccc.gov.fj> or call 8921991.**