

PRESS RELEASE

Vegetarian or Halal Products Must Be Authentic: FCCC And CCOF Friday 11 December 2020

The Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission (FCCC) and Consumer Council of Fiji (CCOF) are urging businesses to comply with all the proper requirements if they are selling food items as vegetarian or Halal.

“We want to create awareness and inform businesses on the breaches of the FCCC Act in terms of misrepresentation, false and misleading advertising on Halal and Vegetarian products,” said FCCC CEO, Joel Abraham.

“FCCC and CCOF will work in Collaboration with Faith-Based Organisations to ensure businesses have complied under proper requirements of the Halal certification from the Fiji Muslim League (FML), or if businesses are making items as vegetarian, that these are actually vegetarian. We have come across instances where some businesses have labelled their products without obtaining proper certification from the relevant organisation.”

Mr Abraham said that before a business could sell products aimed at the specific religious sensibilities of their customers, all requirements needed to be strictly followed, as otherwise, they are deceiving hardworking Fijians who are simply trying to follow their religion faithfully.

“We want to make one thing very clear - this is no trivial matter. If traders are found deceiving Fijian consumers on this, I can assure you that they will be dealt with very severely, as it is an especially heinous breach of the FCCC Act, since there is no proper redress.”

Consumer Council of Fiji Chief Executive Ms Seema Shandil has also called on businesses to be ethical and not to mislead Fijian consumers for the sake of making profit.

“It is extremely unethical of businesses to exploit the religious beliefs of consumers in order to push products which compromises consumers creed and religious doctrine. Businesses must uphold their ethical standards to the highest level and not violate people’s right to exercise their religious conviction” said Ms Shandil.

Abraham also highlighted that a special investigation team has been set up to investigate such matters during this festive season.

All consumer-related complaints can be sent directly through the FCCC web app at FCCC.APP or lodge using the Consumer Council of Fiji mobile app or through the National Consumer Helpline Toll-free 155. You can also contact FCCC on 8921991 or through live chat on their website at fccc.gov.fj. Please follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FijianCCC/ for the latest updates.

-Ends-