



## **ADVISORY**

### **FCCC Warns Against Price Gouging, Urges Consumer Vigilance During Flooding**

**WEDNESDAY 20 March 2024**

The Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission (FCCC) is warning traders against price gouging and other predatory unethical practices as flash-flooding around the nation continues.

FCCC has mobilised teams to carry out targeted inspections and surveys of traders and businesses in flood-affected areas, in addition to our regular inspections to ensure compliance with the FCCC Act 2010.

FCCC CEO, Joel Abraham, issued a stern warning against any trader seeking to take advantage of the current situation and cheat consumers out of their hard-earned money.


“Natural disasters do not justify price hikes and profiteering, particularly for items under FCCC price control and there will be zero tolerance for such behaviour,” said Abraham.

“With schools continuing to be closed, businesses must avoid exploiting vulnerable consumers, such as children. In the past, we have seen some traders engage in unethical conduct such as price gouging, as natural disasters limit shopping options, making the vulnerable more susceptible.”

The current inspections are targeted at areas affected by recent flooding and landslides and will include price inspections, raising awareness among traders, and checking for any shortages of essential goods.

“Our team is currently working with Health Inspectors to check to see that items damaged during the flood are not being sold, as they present food safety risks,” added Abraham.

Abraham also urged consumers to do their due diligence when shopping and to report any issues they find.



“Your reports play a crucial role in enabling us to take appropriate action and safeguard the community against unscrupulous behaviour. If you come across instances of price gouging, unsafe goods, or other unfair practices, please report these incidents through FCCC's official channels. We all have a part to play in consumer protection, including Fijian consumers.”

Consumers are advised to always retain receipts after purchases, so that if there is an issue, you have the required evidence. FCCC also advises taking a snap of your receipt with your phone, so that if you misplace it or it gets damaged due to the weather, you still have proof of purchase.

The public is reminded to limit unnecessary movement to ensure their safety, in compliance with current advisories and to exercise caution when buying supplies.

“We encourage the public to follow the advisories issued by Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and other relevant authorities to see when it is safe to resume normal activities,” said Abraham.

“Ensure you have essential supplies such as canned goods, water, medication, and first-aid kits prepared in case of evacuation or emergencies. Natural disasters are very challenging for those vulnerable, so if you can, please lend a helping hand to those in need, whether its the elderly, individuals with disabilities, pregnant women, and families with young children.”

**For more information or to lodge a complaint, please contact us via phone on 8921991, the FCCC website at [www.fccc.gov.fj](http://www.fccc.gov.fj) , by email at [helpdesk@fccc.gov.fj](mailto:helpdesk@fccc.gov.fj) or any of the appropriate channels at <https://linktr.ee/fijianccc>**

**-Ends-**