STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Review Report of the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission Annual Report 2023-2024

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Acronyms

ADR	-	Alternate Dispute Resolution
APAEA	-	Asia Pacific Applied Economics Association
FCCC	-	Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission
LPG	-	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
MOU	-	Memorandum of Understanding
PINCCER	-	Pacific Island Network of Competition, Consumer and Economic Regulators
SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goal

Chairperson's Foreword

The Standing Committee on Economic Affairs is pleased to submit to Parliament the Review Report of the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission (FCCC) Annual Report 2023-2024.

The FCCC continue to play a vital role as an independent statutory authority tasked with promoting effective competition, ensuring fair trading practices, and protecting the interests of consumers and businesses in Fiji.

The Committee recognises the Commission's achievements during the period under review, including FCCC Act 2010, its functions remain central to fostering a transparent, well-regulated marketplace that supports national economic development. During the period under review, the Committee observed that the FCCC remained aligned with its strategic vision of building a dynamic and competitive market, demonstrating sustained commitment through regulatory oversight, policy development, consumer protection, and public awareness initiatives that collectively enhance the welfare of all Fijians.

Notably, FCCC undertook extensive price monitoring activities, conducting over 2,000 product price reviews, reflecting its active role in regulating prices and ensuring market fairness. In addition, the Commission advanced key policy initiatives, including work on rent stabilisation and reviews of price control orders, highlighting its responsiveness to emerging economic challenges.

The Committee in its analysis identified several key findings which include the lack of enforcement, non -availability of data relating to repeat violations, limited capacity for efficient complaint resolution, limited capacity on measuring the impact of awareness programmes and limited analysis undertaken to monitor post-merger programmes.

To enhance FCCC's efficiency and accountability, the Committee has formulated number of recommendations. This includes the need to effectively monitor and deter repeat offenders, the need to strengthen institutional linkages with other line Ministries to providing a pathway for bringing findings to policy decision, disclosure in future annual reports the average turnaround time from lodgement of complaints to final resolutions and inclusion in future annual reports the outcomes of post-merger assessments including whether approved undertakings have been complied with and what enforcement action, if any, was taken in response to non-compliance.

The Committee also acknowledges FCCC's ongoing efforts in strengthening research capacity, enhancing regulatory frameworks, and expanding stakeholder engagement through awareness programmes, which reached thousands of Fijians across the country. These initiatives are critical in promoting informed consumer behaviour and fostering compliance among traders.

Furthermore, FCCC's expanded role in regulated sectors such as electricity and pharmaceuticals, alongside its commitment to sustainable development goals, underscores its mandate and its contribution to broader national priorities.

The Committee commends FCCC for its continued dedication to promoting competition, protecting consumers, and maintaining market integrity. At the same time, the Committee recognises the importance of continuous improvement in areas such as governance, inclusivity, and adaptation to emerging digital market challenges.

I also acknowledge the valuable contributions of my fellow Committee Members - Hon. Premila Kumar, Hon. Semi Koroilavesau, Hon. Alipate Tuicolo, Hon. Kalaveti Ravu, Hon. Jese Saukuru and secretariat for their support in producing this report.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, I present this Review Report to Parliament and request all members of this august House to take note of its findings in the report.

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Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna
Chairperson

1.0 Committee Membership

Pursuant to Standing Order 109(2)(a) the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs is mandated to look into matters related to economic development, finance, banking and taxation. The members of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs and are as follows:

Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna
Chairperson

Hon. Premila Kumar
Deputy Chairperson

Hon. Semi Koroilavesau
Member

Hon. Alipate Tuicolo
Member

Hon. Kalaveti Ravu
Member

Hon. Jese Saukuru
Member

1.1 Committee Secretariat

The Committee is supported by a team of Parliament Officers serving as the Committee Secretariat. These officers are appointed and delegated by the Secretary-General to Parliament under Standing Order 15(3)(i). The Secretariat team consists of the following Parliament officers:

- Ms. Marica Tuisoso – Senior Committee Clerk
- Ms. Awantika Raj – Deputy Committee Clerk

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2.0 Introduction

The Standing Committee on Economic Affairs ('the Committee'), was referred the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission Annual Report 2023-2024 on 13th March 2026, pursuant to Standing Order 38(2) of the Standing Orders of the Parliament of Fiji. The Committee was mandated to review these Annual Reports and table its findings to Parliament.

In line with its mandate, the Committee undertook a detailed examination of the report and now presents its findings and observations to Parliament.

2.1 Procedure and Programme

2.1.1 The Committee began its review of the Annual Report in May 2026. The review process was agreed upon by consensus among the Committee Members and involved a comprehensive and systematic examination of the reports.

2.1.2 Before the formal meetings, the Members of the Committee read and reviewed the 2023-2024 Annual Report. During the Committee deliberations, Members analysed the content of the reports, identified key issues, and engaged in in-depth discussions to evaluate the findings. These discussions led to the formulation of the key questions and identification of issues requiring further clarification.

2.2 Oral Evidence Received

2.2.1 The Committee received a briefing and public submissions from the FCCC and the Consumer Council of Fiji.

2.3 Written Evidence Received

2.3.1 The Committee received written submission from FCCC and Consumer Council of Fiji in relation to the questions that was sent to them for their response.

3.0 Committee Deliberations and Analysis

3.1 Background

3.1.1 The Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission (FCCC) is an independent statutory body established under the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission Act 2010. The Commission is mandated to promote effective competition, ensure fair trading practices, and protect the interests of consumers across Fiji.

3.1.2 The Commission's core statutory functions include the regulation of markets, monitoring of prices of essential goods and services, investigation of anti-competitive conduct, oversight of mergers and acquisitions, and enforcement of consumer protection laws.

3.1.3 The Commission's strategic objectives centre on maintaining competitive markets, ensuring the affordability of essential goods and services, and strengthening regulatory oversight across key sectors including energy, fuel, pharmaceuticals, transport, and consumer products. The Commission also contributes to national development through policy advice, market research, and enforcement activities that promote compliance and accountability.

3.1.4 The Commission's operations are funded primarily through a government operational grant and the collection of regulatory fees. For the financial year under review, total income was $7.5 million, comprising a government grant of $4.3 million and regulatory fees of $2.7 million.

3.2 Summary of the Performance and Achievements for the FY 2023 - 2024

The Committee notes the following key operational achievements reported by the Commission for the financial year ending 31 July 2024.

3.2.1 Inspections and Price Monitoring

- The Commission conducted a total of **10,659** trader inspections across Fiji to ensure compliance with pricing regulations and fair trading practices. This represents a substantial operational undertaking and reflects the Commission's continued commitment to market surveillance.
- The Commission undertook over 2,000 price reviews across key regulated sectors including electricity, fuel, transport, and essential consumer goods, to maintain price stability and household affordability.

3.2.2 Complaints and Dispute Resolution

A total of 888 complaints were formally received and investigated during the financial year, comprising:

- 517 complaints (58%) relating to price-controlled goods;
- 279 complaints (31%) relating to unfair trading practices; and
- 92 complaints (10%) relating to residential rental disputes.

This represents a fourfold increase from the 211 complaints recorded in the financial year 2022–2023, which the Committee regards as the most significant operational indicator in the Annual Report and which is examined in detail in Section 4 of this Report.

3.2.3 Enforcement Outcomes

In terms of enforcement, the Commission reported the following outcomes for the financial year under review:

- 34 charges filed;
- 1,847 court appearances recorded; and
- $86,000 secured in court-ordered fines, in addition to compensation and settlements awarded to affected consumers.

3.2.4 Mergers and Acquisitions:

The Commission assessed four Mergers and Acquisitions matters during the financial year, with a combined declared value of $3.496 billion. The sectors involved included telecommunications, energy, and fuel and LPG.

3.2.5 Public Outreach and Awareness

- The Commission engaged over 9,000 participants through awareness programmes, workshops, and community initiatives, reflecting a significant expansion in its public outreach activities.
- The Commission hosted the inaugural Pacific Island Network of Competition, Consumer and Economic Regulators (PINCCER) Conference, strengthening regional cooperation on consumer protection and competition regulation.

3.2.6 Institutional and Operational Developments

- The Commission established a new satellite office in Sigatoka, expanding its geographic reach and accessibility for consumers and businesses in the Western Division.

- The Commission progressed key policy and regulatory reform initiatives, including the development of a Rent Stabilisation Policy and the review of Hardware and Biscuit Price Control Orders.
- The Commission strengthened its research and analytical capacity through collaboration with the Asia Pacific Applied Economics Association (APAEA), including the publication of research outputs and delivery of training programmes.

3.2.7 Financial Performance

- Total income for the financial year was **$7.5 million**, an increase from $6.9 million in the prior year.
- The Commission recorded a **surplus of $276,968**, compared to $368,352 in the prior year, a decline of approximately 25% in surplus despite increased revenue.
- Personnel costs increased to **$4.49 million** from $3.89 million in the prior year, representing the primary driver of increased expenditure.

4.0 Committee's Findings

The Committee conducted a thorough review of the annual report and identified several key findings as stated below:

4.1 The Committee notes that registered complaints increased significantly from 211 in the 2022–2023 financial year to 888 in the 2023–2024 financial year. While this may reflect increased consumer awareness and confidence in the FCCC, it may also indicate deteriorating market practices and widespread non-compliance. Of the total complaints received, 517, or 58 percent, related to price-controlled items, pointing to serious concerns regarding compliance with price regulations, which remain a core responsibility of the FCCC.

4.2 The Committee further notes that the courts imposed a total of $86,000 in fines during the year under review. While this demonstrates some level of enforcement activity, the amount appears modest when compared to the scale of non-compliance identified through 10,659 inspections, 256 active court files, and 888 complaints. Only 34 charges were filed from the total complaints received, raising concerns about the overall deterrent effect and effectiveness of enforcement measures.

4.3 The Committee is also concerned that only three mediations were successfully conducted through the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism during the financial year. This remains extremely low relative to the number of complaints received. Given that ADR is internationally recognised as a cost-effective and accessible consumer redress mechanism, the low uptake may suggest limited public awareness, lack of confidence in the process, or structural barriers that require further examination.

4.4 The Committee notes that four mergers and acquisitions cases, with a combined value of $3.496 billion, were assessed during the financial year in sectors such as telecommunications, energy, fuel, and (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) LPG. However, the report provides little detail on the outcomes of these assessments, including whether they were approved, conditionally approved, or rejected. In a small and concentrated market such as Fiji, greater transparency is needed, given the significant implications for competition and consumer welfare.

4.5 The Committee further notes that FCCC's total income increased from $6.9 million to $7.5 million, driven largely by a government operational grant of $4.3 million and regulatory fees amounting to $2.7 million. Despite the increase in revenue, the annual surplus declined by 25 percent, from $368,352 to $276,968, indicating growing operational and staffing cost pressures, particularly personnel costs which increased from $3.89 million to $4.49 million.

4.6 The Committee notes the absence of reported data on repeat offenders in the Annual Report. This limits the ability to assess patterns of persistent non-compliance and the effectiveness of enforcement efforts in driving behavioural change among traders.

4.7 The Committee recognises FCCC's efforts in undertaking data-driven research and market interventions aimed at improving affordability. However, there is limited clarity on how these research outputs are translated into concrete regulatory or policy actions that directly benefit consumers.

4.8 The Committee observes that while the complaints mechanism has generated increased public engagement, concerns regarding delays in investigations and feedback indicate potential capacity constraints that may affect timely resolution of cases.

4.9 The Committee finds a significant gap between the number of complaints lodged and the level of final redress achieved. The low utilisation of Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms and the limited progression of complaints to court outcomes suggest inefficiencies in converting complaints into effective remedies for consumers.

4.10 The Committee acknowledges the introduction of the Voluntary Compliance Framework as a positive initiative; however, the continued high levels of non-compliance indicate that existing enforcement and deterrence measures may not be sufficiently effective in influencing trader behaviour.

4.11 The Committee notes that current reporting on awareness and outreach activities is largely output-based, focusing on the number of sessions conducted rather than measuring actual impact on consumer knowledge, behaviour, and empowerment.

4.12 The Committee observes that while FCCC has strengthened its data collection and price monitoring capabilities, there is limited evidence of escalation mechanisms to address significant and sudden price increases in essential goods, particularly where such increases place pressure on household affordability.

4.13 The Committee finds that rental-related issues remain a persistent concern, with indications of possible underreporting due to tenant vulnerability and fear of eviction, highlighting gaps in both the regulatory framework and enforcement environment.

4.14 The Committee notes weaknesses in post-merger monitoring, including the low number of reported compliance checks and the absence of disclosure on enforcement actions. This raises concerns about FCCC's capacity to effectively monitor and enforce conditions attached to high-value merger approvals.

5.0 Committee's Recommendations

The Committee makes the following recommendations to protect consumers, enhance FCCC's efficiency, accountability, and create a fair marketplace:

5.1 Publish complaint resolution data for all 888 complaints, to provide a breakdown of outcomes, for example, charges filed, warnings issued, mediated, withdrawn, or still under investigation. This is basic accountability reporting.

5.2 FCCC should work closely with the Consumer Council of Fiji through a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to better utilise limited human and financial resources. Under such an arrangement, the Consumer Council should assume primary responsibility for alternative dispute resolution and consumer awareness programmes, enabling the Commission to focus on its core statutory functions, including price control enforcement, mergers and acquisitions oversight, and competition regulation. This will maximise the efficient use of limited public resources across both institutions.

5.3 Increase transparency in mergers and acquisitions by publishing summaries of all decisions, including the reasons for approvals or objections, as well as any conditions for approvals.

5.4 Enhance enforcement visibility by reporting the number of repeat offenders prosecuted and brought before the courts, demonstrating that persistent non-compliance results in tangible consequences.

5.5 Strengthen institutional collaboration between FCCC and key ministries by formalising pathways to integrate research findings on inflation and market conditions into national policy decision-making processes.

5.6 Disclose in the Annual Report details of submissions made to Government, including their status and outcomes, while increasing scrutiny on excessive mark-ups, coordinated pricing behaviour, and ensuring that tax reductions are effectively passed on to consumers.

5.7 Improve accountability by reporting the average turnaround time for complaint resolution across all divisions, alongside a clearer categorisation of complaint outcomes.

5.8 Publish detailed complaint closure classifications, including cases resolved through settlement, withdrawal, prosecution, referral, or unresolved closure, to better assess consumer relief and enforcement effectiveness.

5.9 Strengthen deterrence by adopting a targeted "name and shame" approach for habitual offenders, alongside enhanced oversight of digital commerce and social media trading.

5.10 Introduce qualitative impact assessments, such as post-awareness surveys, and include demographic and geographic data to evaluate the effectiveness of outreach, particularly in rural and maritime communities.

5.11 Expand monitoring to ensure not only price compliance but also the physical availability of price-controlled goods, with reporting on actions taken to address artificial shortages, hoarding, and selective stocking practices.

5.12 Enhance consumer protection for vulnerable tenants through proactive, intelligence-led inspections, anonymous reporting mechanisms, and targeted awareness initiatives to address underreporting due to fear of retaliation.

6.0 Sustainable Development Goals

The Committee notes that the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission has demonstrated its commitment to supporting national and global development priorities through alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

6.1 In particular, FCCC's work during the financial year 2023–2024 contributes to the following key SDGs:

- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth** – through promoting fair competition, regulating markets, and supporting a stable economic environment that encourages sustainable growth.
- **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production** – through price control mechanisms, market monitoring, and consumer awareness initiatives that promote responsible consumption practices.
- **SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions** – through strengthening governance frameworks, enhancing enforcement actions, and ensuring accountability and transparency in market regulation.

6.2 The Committee further acknowledges FCCC's integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into its operations, including sustainability initiatives such as recycling programmes, environmental awareness activities, and institutional governance improvements.

6.3 The Committee encourages FCCC to continue strengthening its alignment with SDGs, particularly in areas of inclusivity, digital transformation, and consumer protection in emerging markets.

7.0 Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Economic Affairs, having carefully reviewed the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission (FCCC) Annual Report for the financial year 2023–2024, acknowledges FCCC's continued role as a key institution in promoting fair competition, protecting consumer interests, and maintaining market integrity in Fiji.

The Committee recognises FCCC's progress in expanding its operational reach through inspections, price monitoring, research initiatives, and public awareness programmes. These efforts have contributed to increased consumer engagement, as reflected by the significant rise in complaints received during the reporting period.

However, the Committee's review highlights several structural and operational challenges that require urgent attention. These include gaps in enforcement effectiveness, limited transparency in key regulatory functions such as mergers and acquisitions, underutilisation of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and insufficient data reporting on complaint outcomes and repeat offenders. Additionally, concerns relating to delays in complaint resolution, limited measurement of awareness impact, and weak post-merger monitoring frameworks indicate the need for strengthened institutional capacity and improved accountability mechanisms.

The Committee also notes that while FCCC has demonstrated strong data collection and analytical capabilities, there is a need to ensure that such insights are consistently translated into timely regulatory interventions and policy actions that directly benefit consumers, particularly in addressing affordability pressures and market distortions.

In light of these findings, the Committee emphasises the importance of enhancing transparency, strengthening enforcement and deterrence, improving inter-agency collaboration, and adopting more proactive and consumer-focused regulatory strategies. Particular attention must be given to protecting vulnerable groups, strengthening oversight in concentrated sectors, and ensuring that regulatory outcomes deliver tangible benefits to Fijian households.

The Committee therefore encourages FCCC to give due consideration to the recommendations outlined in this Report, as they are intended to strengthen its effectiveness, accountability, and public confidence.

The Committee commends FCCC for its overall contribution during the financial year under review and submits this Report to Parliament for its consideration.

8.0 Committee Members' Signatures

.... Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna **Chairperson**	
.... Hon. Premila Kumar **Deputy Chairperson**	.... Hon. Semi Koroilavesau **Member**
.... Hon. Alipate Tuicolo **Member**	.... Hon. Kalaveti Ravu **Member**
.... Hon. Jese Saukuru **Member**	

9.0 Annexure

Published evidence

Written evidence, transcripts and supporting documents can be viewed on the Parliament website at the following link:
https://www.parliament.gov.fj/committees/standing-committee-on-economic-affairs/