



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 9 DECEMBER 2022

CONSUMERS ALERT: RELIABLE STORE NOT RELIABLE

The Consumer Goods and Services Ombud (CGSO) has issued another consumer alert for the year against the online retailer, Reliable Store, sellers of a wide range of products including electronic appliances, computers and accessories, cameras, gaming tools etc. Consumers are warned to be careful when trading with Reliable Store as they have, based on their response to complaints received by this office, to not be reliable.

Reliable Store operates online and they sell a large variety of products including electrical appliances, computers and accessories, cameras, gaming tools etc. Most of the complaints received relate to delays in delivering orders, the delivery of incorrect orders to complainants and a general failure to deliver orders. Reliable Store accepts payment from complainants and provides a turnaround time for deliveries, however they tend to fail to keep up with the stipulated times. When complainants cancel their orders and request refunds, they fail to refund or take a long time to do so.

From 01 October 2021 to 01 December 2022, the CGSO received a total of 93 complaints against Reliable Store. When the CGSO was originally dealing with complaints against this supplier, they would respond to some of the complaints from our office and we would also receive acknowledgement emails from the supplier. The supplier refunded some complainants and delivered the correct orders in some of the resolved complaints. However Reliable Store has since stopped responding to our office nor to the complainants and has subsequently stopped resolving complaints and in 35 of the complaints, we have issued Termination Notices and advised the complainants to escalate the complaints to the National Consumer Commission due to no co-operation from the supplier.

It therefore seems that the supplier is in contravention of section 19 of the Consumer Protection Act (“CPA”) which provides that a supplier must refund a consumer if they are unable to deliver goods or services on the agreed date. The supplier also seems to be contravening section 41 of the CPA which relates to false, misleading, or deceptive representations regarding the availability, delivery or performance of services within a specified time.

“Ms Magauta Mphahlele, the Ombudsman advise that “ 25% of all complaints received by this office in financial year 2021/22 related to online shopping. Our office continues to monitor this trend and will not hesitate to name and shame online suppliers who fail to cooperate with our office to resolve complaints. We urge all online suppliers to comply with the Consumer

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Protection Act . We also urge consumers to be vigilant and deal only with reputable online suppliers. One criterion that consumers can use is to check the website of the supplier if they are registered with the CGSO. All retailers in South Africa are required to register with the CGSO in order to give confidence to the consumer that they will comply with the CPA and resolve disputes.

"The message is clear: getting the basics right and engaging with customers in an ethical, transparent manner is a competitive advantage in today's online marketplace," concludes Mphahlele.

Ends

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