

Vodafone partners with small businesses to promote safer payment options

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Vodafone has partnered with local micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to provide safer and more convenient service options for customers to make purchases through its mobile money platform – M-Paisa.

This partnership, which was officially launched in Suva today, has been developed with support from Australian-funded Market Development Facility (MDF) and comes in response to the impact of COVID-19 which has forced businesses to rethink how they engage with customers.

Vodafone's M-PAiSA is bringing new and improved services to local customers. For example, international remittance, through M-Paisa, has reduced the cost of sending money home, which has seen steady growth from F\$2m/month to F\$3.5m/month since COVID-19.

“As businesses strive to adapt to the effects of COVID-19, Australia will continue to support private sector innovation and the use of technology to help businesses and individuals adapt. Given the importance of hygiene and perceived risks around handling cash, this type of cashless payment option comes at just the right time,” said Australian High Commissioner to Fiji, John Feakes.

This added service to the Vodafone M-PAiSA platform facilitates mobile payments and purchases from local MSMEs. This will be initially rolled out and made available through select local businesses, including The Merch, Rotisserie Restaurant, Weta Coffee and Cyber Foods.

As an added incentive to promote greater awareness about the cashless payment platform, these businesses are offering consumers a 10 percent discount on any purchase when the payment is made with the M-PAiSA QR code.

“We understand the effects that COVID-19 has on many Fijians. This promotion will encourage people to use M-Paisa and get attractive price discounts at some of their favourite shops”, said Shailendra Prasad, Head of E-Commerce, Vodafone Fiji Limited.

“We trialed the 10 percent discount with The Merch over the weekend and saw many people take advantage of the offer whilst appreciating the safer cashless payment. In many ways, it is easier for small businesses to adopt mobile payment programs because of the minimal setup costs so small businesses can jump right in,” Mr Prasad said.

The ease of access to electronic payment channels such as M-PAiSA, is an important building block to digital trade. At this time, when less human contact is being encouraged by health experts, M-PAiSA is also considered safer and more hygienic way to pay for products and services. It is also way to assist small business to do more business as they have been affected by lockdown and limited trading hours.



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