

NEWS RELEASE

January 2017

Ahura Resorts Fiji Appoint Environmental Specialist

Likuliku Lagoon Resort and Malolo Island Resort will continue to shine for future generations



Ahura Resorts is delighted to announce the appointment of environmental specialist Sia Rasalato to the position of Group Environment Manager.

As a leading Fiji resort company, signing on Sia demonstrates Ahura's serious ongoing commitment to sustainable and responsible eco-tourism.

"As a resort company operating in a pristine, sensitive environment such as ours, with ocean and coral reefs on one side and land flora and fauna on the other, we fully recognize the importance of sustainable tourism and believe that development in such areas carries both a legal and moral responsibility to ensure our environment is not degraded through irresponsible activities and practices. Sia has extensive qualifications and experience in environmental management within Fiji, and it is a great honour to welcome him to our team" comments Steve Anstey, Group General Manager Ahura Resorts.

"Our aim is to not only minimize our impact on the extraordinary nature that surrounds us but also, through a range of activities, programs and initiatives, improve and enhance the environment for imperilled species and future generations. The significant work we have done to date with the iguanas and now the recent appointment of Sia demonstrates this commitment" continues Steve.

The discovery of a Fiji Crested Iguana in 2010 at Likuliku Lagoon resort kicked off an incredible research journey, sparked by the species' classification as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List. Fiji Crested Iguanas are naturally found only in Fiji, and their presence is therefore beneficial to the eco-tourism economy. Each island that is lucky enough to still have an iguana population will have their own unique genetic "finger print," and each island often supports an iguana species different from all others in Fiji. They may look similar and be close relatives, but they are different and DNA sampling of iguanas will indicate which island they are from. The iguanas on Malolo were thought to be extinct for over 25 years before the exciting rediscovery in 2010.

Like most animals on the brink of extinction, the demise of the Fiji Iguana has been largely due to the destruction of their natural forest habitat through human activities and the introduction of non-

native animals including rats, cats, mongoose and goats which either eat the iguanas or eat their food.

Dry forest is one of the most endangered eco-systems on the planet and is crucial to the survival of the Fiji Iguana and other wildlife. Unfortunately, only small pockets of dry forest remain on Malolo and the islands of the Mamanuca group.

The US Geological Survey, San Diego Zoo and Taronga Zoo have been valuable partners with Ahura Resorts over the last six years. The team has carried out major control of feral cat and rat populations, and has begun a reforestation project which has now become a focal point. Ahura have started their own dry forest nursery which Sia will now manage in addition to developing and overseeing the regeneration work on the Ahura leases. Sia will also be responsible for the management of the Iguana catch, tag and release program and the on-site captive breeding program. He will also be working closely with the Mamanuca Environment Society to ensure conservation and preservation of our marine and reef areas.

Sia exudes a passion for conservation. At his former post with BirdLife International Pacific Secretariat he led numerous restoration and land protection activities including invasive species feasibility assessments, invasive species eradication, island biosecurity implementation, species monitoring, and endangered species recovery. Sia was also instrumental in conservation and management planning of significant conservation sites in Cook Islands, French Polynesia, and Fiji and supported invasive species work in Tonga, New Caledonia, Palau and Samoa. He is currently pursuing his graduate studies at the University of the South Pacific, Fiji and has attended an impressive number of conservation workshops and internships in Fiji and abroad.

“I am excited to start a new challenge with Ahura Resorts, Fiji’s leading resort company and I look forward to working with the team to further develop their commitment to sustainable eco-tourism. It’s a great privilege to be joining a respected company that prides itself on top quality service and promotes ecological approaches to the conservation of natural resources ” adds Sia Rasalato.

Sia comes to Ahura Resorts Fiji with over 10 years of experience in the conservation field. Most recently, he played a major role in securing the conservation site of the endangered Fiji Mastiff Bat and was also involved in the conservation work of Fiji’s most notable seabirds - the Collared and Fiji Petrel.

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Ahura was an ancient god of creations who symbolised life, kindness, equality, care of the environment, charity, loyalty and faithfulness to settlement, tribe and county. The omnipresent sun was an enduring symbol of radiance, purity and life sustenance. Today, Ahura Resorts embodies these same values. As a 100% Fijian-owned company, with over 30 years experience in tourism and hospitality throughout the Pacific, Ahura is dedicated to providing quality holiday and lifestyle experiences while preserving cultural values and the surrounding environment. Ahura is the management company operating one of Fiji’s most popular and well-known resorts - Malolo Island Fiji, and the luxury escape for couples which features Fiji’s first and only authentic over-water bures - Likuliku Lagoon Resort. Experience the Warm Heart of Fiji with Ahura Resorts. www.ahuraresorts.com

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