

AHURA RESORTS

Ahura is the 100% Fijian owned management company operating Malolo Island Fiji, and the unique luxury escape for couples which features Fiji's first and only authentic over-water bures, Likuliku Lagoon Resort – also located on Malolo Levu Island.

Environmental Policy

We live and operate in a pristine but fragile ecosystem that traverses both sea and land. As a Resort company operating in such a pristine sensitive environment we support wholly the concept of sustainable tourism and believe that any development in such areas carries not only a legal but also a moral responsibility to ensure that the environment is not degraded through irresponsible activities and practices.

Sustainable tourism is also about the people and the culture. It is about providing livelihood opportunities for improving and helping island communities and individuals through the development of businesses that provide jobs, training and on-going development without compromising or taking advantage of the culture or the people involved.

Ahura Resorts is an equal opportunity employer. We are a family business, 100% Fijian owned and have strong personal ties with the land, the sea and the people of Fiji. Our Resorts are built on land that has a 99-year lease. Royalties are paid to the Landowners as well as a monthly rental calculated on a percentage of all sales. Ahura also provides an education fund for the landowners. Our terrestrial and marine conservation initiatives include:

1. We are active in providing on-going training, education and advocacy to resort staff, guests and members of the local community in the conservation and caring for the environment. We are also involved in projects including turtle conservation, coral gardening and restoration, crown of thorns eradication, giant clam restoration, mangrove restoration, water quality monitoring and reef health assessments.
2. In July 2005 the late Paramount Chief of the Malolo Islands “*Turaga Na Tui Lawa*” traditionally declared the waters and reefs in front of Likuliku Lagoon a Marine Protected Area or “*Na Tabu*”. This is an environmental initiative in partnership with the landowners to improve fish stocks and species and allow natural recovery and restoration of house reefs and marine life as part of responsible sustainable tourism. The “*Na Tabu*” means that any form of fishing or shell and coral collecting is strictly forbidden and this applies to locals and visitors alike.
3. Tropical Dry Forest Restoration Program - Tropical dry forests are forests located in dry areas throughout the tropics. In Fiji, these forests can be found in the rain-shadow region of the group. This type of vegetation is among the most endangered ecosystems on the planet. Once, most islands in the Mamanuca island group were covered in tropical dry forest; today, only 1% of this ecosystem remains. Most of it in the form of small isolated pockets. Apart from the loss of vegetation, the Dry Forests are also home to a variety of endangered species, such as the Fijian Crested Iguana (*Brachylophus vitiensis*) and the Fijian Free-tailed Bat (*Tadarida bregullae*). The Tropical Dry Forest also provide niches for endemic and native species such as the Fiji Goshawk (*Accipiter rufitorques*), Pacific Boas (*Candoia bibroni*), and Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*). Working with Fiji’s Department of Forestry and the South Pacific Regional Herbarium; a planting program has been set up to restore and stitch together dry forest patches with native tree species on Likuliku Lagoon and Malolo Island Resort leases. Another program that supplements the restoration program is the removal of any introduced species that prohibit or limit the development and growth of the Dry forest ecosystem.

4. The Malolo Island Crested Iguanas (*Brachylophus vitiensis*), were considered extinct until 2010 when an injured adult was discovered at Likuliku Lagoon Resort. The specie was later sent to Kula Park on Fiji's mainland for care but unfortunately died – its tissue remains are kept at the University of the South Pacific. Visiting researchers, Dr. Robert Fisher of the US Geological Survey and Dr. Peter Harlow of Taronga Zoo were informed of the find whereby they extracted a tissue sample from the specimen which was sent to San Diego Zoo in the USA for DNA analysis. The results came back indicating that it was a species thought to be extinct. Working with researchers from the US Geological Survey, Taronga Zoo and San Diego Zoo, immediate steps were taken by Ahura Resorts to identify major threats that could be inhibiting the growth of the Malolo iguanas.

First and foremost, an invasive species management program was implemented in controlling the local feral cat and rat populations; and secondly, a restoration plan was implemented to restore the natural habitat of the Malolo iguanas. This habitat is commonly termed as a dry forest, categorized as one of the most critically endangered vegetation type in the world. As a result of the dry forest restoration plan, a nursery was established at Likuliku Lagoon Resort in 2012 which has since produced more than 6500 native tree species that have been planted within the resort leases.

In June 2015, 3 years after these programs were implemented, a survey in one of the last remaining dry forest patches was conducted and revealed six new iguanas, indicating that the program had worked. Two of the six iguanas were captured, DNA samples taken, tagged and released back into the wild. As a result of these finds, a decision was made to bring in a sponsored post-graduate Herpetology student from the University of Georgia in the USA for a period of 3 months in 2016. His task was to consolidate all the work done on iguanas, and to expand the surveys with the aim of finding more iguanas on other dry forest patches. This resulted in the discovery of 3 juveniles, who were subsequently tagged and released back into the wild.

By July 2019, a total of 44 individual wild iguanas had been documented within Ahura leases. The conservation programs put in place in 2011, had clearly made a positive impact as the growing population had become visible. All newly found iguanas have been electronically tagged for tracking and DNA sampled thus enabling researchers to track them over time. Ongoing surveys have shown continued success of the program and a further increase in this specie population. There are 4 pairs of iguanas held in captivity at Likuliku Lagoon Resort for observation and breeding purposes in an Assurance Colony. They have all been DNA tested and are of the original Malolo species.

In August 2017, the first successful breeding in captivity occurred followed by further hatchings in August 2018. Now in addition to the adult colony, there is a promising hatchling population kept at the sanctuary.

5. In 2018 we secured the lease of Mociu Private Island (Honeymoon Island). *Mociu* (pronounced "Moor-thiew"), is a tiny, uninhabited island only 15 minutes boat ride from both Malolo and Likuliku Lagoon resorts. Mociu has been designated as a protected nature reserve. The waters and reef around it have also been traditionally declared a marine reserve or "Na Tabu" by the local community – meaning no form of fishing or shell fish collecting is allowed. The island is for the enjoyment of Ahura Resort guests only and will also be used to further develop and expand our environmental conservation initiatives as mentioned above including: dry forest restoration, invasive species management, coral/clam restoration and other marine and terrestrial conservation projects. Access to the land is by invitation only.

Operational environmental practices are now part of everyday resort life with ongoing commitments to the conservation of flora and fauna, the ocean, the land and archaeological sites including regenerative and recycling measures such as:

- Regular inspections by Environmental Engineers and specialists to ensure standards are being met
- On-going review, revision and evaluation of new alternative energy sources including solar panels and wind alternatives
- Elimination of single-use plastics (80% at Likuliku and ongoing, 30% at Malolo and ongoing) including the introduction of ceramic in-room amenity dispensers; paper straws; wooden “swizzle” sticks; in-room water dispensers and provision of aluminum water flasks (Likuliku)
- Use of energy efficient light bulbs throughout the Resorts
- Use of environmentally friendly cleaning products in the laundries and around the Resorts
- State of the art Sewage Treatment Plants at both Resorts
- Utilizing treated residue and effluent from the Sewage Treatment Plant as compost component and for irrigating resort lawns and reforestation projects
- Water desalination plant and regular water testing
- Waste removal program that sees all rubbish transported off the resort to the mainland for disposal
- Re-routing and elimination of resort run-off entering the sea
- Regular on-going training and education of staff on environmental practices
- Implementation of Marine conservation projects including coral gardening, giant clam restoration program, crown of thorn eradication program, turtle tagging and mangrove restoration program.
- Integration of environmental education in the Malolo Kids Club program
- Participation and commemoration of annual world marked environmental events such as World Oceans Day, International Day of Forest, International Biodiversity Day, World Mangrove Day, and World Earth Day.
- Installation of water catchment system to work in tandem with our water desalination system
- Appointment of a full-time Group Environment Manager to manage and oversee a full-time program of conservation initiatives and, terrestrial and marine restoration programs

Ahura Resorts contributes to the wider community through working with the Koroipita Housing Project, the Roy Whitton Orthopedic Foundation and the Cancer Association.

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