

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 over-water bures, Likuliku Lagoon Resort – also located on Malolo 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 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. Flora and Fauna Environmental Initiatives include:

1. We are active members of the Mamanuca Environment Society (MES) providing on-going training and education to resort staff, guests and the village people in the preservation and caring for the environment. MES is also involved in projects including Turtle conservation, coral transplanting, Crown of Thorns eradication, 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 Reserve 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 regions of the Fiji Islands. 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 the 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 South Pacific Regional Herbarium; a planting program has been set up to restore and stitch together dry forest patches on Likuliku Lagoon and Malolo Island leases with native tree species. 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, categorised as 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 3500 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 2016, a total of 21 individual wild iguanas had been documented within Ahura leases. The conservation programs put in place 5 years ago, 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. It is hoped that ongoing surveys will show continued success of the programs and a further increase in this specie population. There are 10 iguanas held in captivity at Likuliku Lagoon Resort for observation and breeding purposes. They have all been DNA tested and are of the original Malolo species.

In January 2017, the first successful breeding in captivity occurred and now in addition to the adult colony, there are two hatchlings in captivity.

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 is a protected nature reserve and the waters and reef around it have been declared a marine "na tabu" by the Paramount Chief of the Mamanucas – 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 initiatives as mentioned above including: dry forest restoration, predator eradication, coral/clam and other marine transplanting and preservation and other bio-diversity protection. Access to the land is by invitation only.

Operational environmental practices are now part of everyday resort life with ongoing commitments to the preservation of Flora and Fauna, the land and the 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 power sources including solar panels and wind alternatives
- Use of energy efficient light globes throughout the Resort
- Use of environmentally friendly cleaning products in the laundry and around the Resort
- Bio Cycle sewage treatment plant using natural processing of waste material and low power.
- Sub surface irrigation systems utilizing treated water from the bio cycle system
- Water desalination plant
- Waste removal program that sees all rubbish transported off the resort to the mainland for disposal
- Elimination of resort run off entering the sea
- Regular on-going training and education of staff on environmental practices

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