



MEDIA RELEASE

Tourism Fiji Announces Three More Bulanaires!

Nadi, 14 February 2020 – Tourism Fiji is excited to announce three more individuals this week who have been named for Phase Two of our Bulanaires program for this year; Filomena Merelesita, Caroline Oakley and Alipate Laveti.

Following the success of the Bulanaires 2019 campaign, this year's program has been extended to celebrate and recognize the amazing efforts of Fiji's tourism frontliners. Tourism Fiji has received lots of nominations from industry stakeholders across Fiji for the program and expect more anticipated to come next week.

Filomena Merelesita hails from Kubulau in Bua Province and works as an office supervisor, wedding & guest concierge at Namale Resort & Spa in Savusavu. She was nominated by the company General Manager, Nowdla Keefe who said, "Filo embodies the Bula Spirit - truly rich in happiness. She is the epitome of warmth, dedication and hospitality and would be an amazing ambassador for the Bulanaires program.

"She does it every day here at Namale. She started in our Food & Beverage department then moved to concierge and weddings, now she is our Guest Services Supervisor. She always has a Bula smile; she's great at anticipating guest (and staff) needs," explained Keefe.

Our second Bulaire is an exceptionally talented frontliner who is known for personalizing menus from scratch for her guests and sharing her deep passion for food with her customers. She is Caroline Oakley, Head Chef at Kokomo Private Island Resort. Caroline works hard to allow her guests to experience true Fijian flavours and has gained recognition in several internationally culinary magazines like Vogue Australia,

When asked why she should be a Bulaire she said, "All I can say is I believe that cooking is a part of me; every dish that I create has a piece of my heart and soul. Every taste, every flavour, every ingredient brings joy. Nothing is more rewarding to me than seeing someone celebrate my food. With this, I thrive on someone's happiness. Food is the biggest part of any person's life. I create a connection with whatever is on the plate and from here they become family. Every single person I have ever cooked for, I remember and celebrate their return as if they were my own family."



Nominated by Kokomo Private Island Director of Sales and Marketing, Ms Louise Smythe who said Caroline gives her 100% in everything she does and that guests absolutely adores her!

Our third Bulanaire is Alipate Laveti, a mixologist from Savusavu and isParadise Beverages' ambassador for their Rum Co of Fiji brand.

Nominated by General Manager of Marketing and New Product Development Paradise Beverages Ms. Rowena Ah Sam said, "He has...helped grow our brands through teaching resort/bar staff around the country how to make all our cocktails."

She added that he is a great role model for young, aspirational locals as he works hard; starting off as as a bartender and quickly moving up the ranks.

The Bulanaires will work with Tourism Fiji to help share the '*Bula Spirit*' with the world and reinforce why Fiji is the place where happiness finds you. Nominations are still open to tourism partners and stakeholders and will close on **Tuesday 18 February**. We encourage all tourism stakeholders to nominate their Bulanaire by visiting www.fiji.travel/bulanaires for more information.

About Us: Tourism Fiji, is the Fijian government's agency responsible for marketing Fiji as the ideal destination for leisure travel to the world, with a view to maximise the number of visitors to Fiji. Tourism Fiji has established a presence in eight key markets around the globe and its activities include advertising, public relations and media programs, trade shows and programs for the tourism industry and consumer

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