

## **GOING FORWARD AFTER CYCLONE PAT'S VISIT TO AITUTAKI**

Kia Orana

Thank you to everyone for your prayers, kind thoughts and comforting words as we weather the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Pat at Aitutaki. Cyclone Pat had no impact whatsoever on Rarotonga.

Our first priority was to ensure the safety and comfort of all our guests at sister resort, Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa, and thereafter make all the arrangements necessary for their safe transfer to Rarotonga the following day.

Our guests have been overwhelmingly praiseworthy of all steps taken by our Aitutaki Lagoon Resort Manager, Rose Kareroa, and her team to ensure their safety, comfort and wellbeing during this emergency.

We are indeed greatly relieved there were no fatalities or serious casualties following the battering from Tropical Cyclone Pat which has left a swathe of devastation on our beautiful island paradise of Aitutaki.

There is much clean-up work to be done all around Aitutaki, and many of our staff are among those who have lost their homes or sustained serious damage to them. Many public buildings have also been severely damaged.

At Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa, we have flown up a team of men and materials from Rarotonga to begin work on the clean up and repairs necessary to our private island resort. Being as close to nature as we are at Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa, with 'The Best Views on Earth of the World's Most Beautiful Lagoon' – truly front row seats – does mean that we can be exposed to the wrath of nature at such times, the price of uninterrupted, panoramic lagoon views. As a result we have in place second-to-none emergency procedures, and we are also pleased to report that overall the resort has emerged in excellent shape, although there is much clean-up to be done to the island grounds and materials worked loose by Pat's fury.

For guests who were due to have stayed at Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa in the immediate future, we are working with them on individual tailored solutions to best meet their needs under the circumstances.

Many of our guests have enthusiastically opted to sample our new, adults-only resort, Sanctuary Rarotonga-on the beach ([www.SanctuaryRarotonga.com](http://www.SanctuaryRarotonga.com)), which features a beautiful new swimming pool, swim-up pool bar, sand-floor beachfront restaurant, tennis, wireless internet and new SpaPolynesia LUXE @ Lime Blossom Villa.

Naturally it will be disappointing for guests to have had their dream holiday in Aitutaki disrupted by this sad occurrence, but most appreciate the time taken to identify the best solution to help them make the best of their Cook Islands holiday overall. In the end we have all been handed a lemon, and must of need make lemonade.

For those of our guests who prefer to holiday after Aitutaki's clean-up is completed, we are pleased to provide the following rebooking policy for Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa, in line with Air New Zealand's current re-booking policy for Aitutaki.

### **Aitutaki temporary re-booking and cancellation policy:**

For guests who are due to check-in to Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa from **now through to 18 February 2010**, we will permit anyone who is holding a confirmed and fully deposited reservation (and are within our non-refundable deposit/cancellation penalty window) to:

- i. Transfer their reservation to either of our sister properties, our new adults-only resort, Sanctuary Rarotonga-on the beach, or The Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa;
- ii. Amend the check-in date to a later date prior to 31 March 2010. We will endeavor to provide all clients rebooking with a complimentary one-room category upgrade where possible, based on space availability at time of rebooking.
- iii. Cancel the reservation and request a refund on their accommodation. Normal Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa cancellation policy charges will apply under this option. (Note: these cancellation charges may be recoverable under standard travel insurance policies).

Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa would also like to take this opportunity to ask for your support in this time of need. The full extent of the damage sustained by the whole island is yet to fully come to light, but many of the island's residents have been left homeless and many small businesses badly affected. All businesses in the Cook Islands have extremely high cyclone insurance excess levels imposed by insurance companies, resulting in the vast majority of businesses in the Cook Islands being un-insured for cyclones and hurricanes. Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa is locally-owned, and one of the key businesses on the island providing work and income to many local families on Aitutaki and with significant economic flow-through to Rarotonga through client use of Air Rarotonga and pre- and post- stays on Rarotonga island. We have been heartened to receive your support for our tourism industry and the people of Aitutaki and the Cook Islands by holding or re-booking your reservation as opposed to canceling outright. Thank you in advance for your help, it is greatly appreciated by all of us here as we undertake the daunting task of re-building our beautiful island paradise.

Please make all reservation amendments or cancellations through your normal communication channels. We ask that you apply the following code to all communications relating to any changes required based on the above policy: **PAT**

For any further assistance required, please email our Executive Assistant Manager on Rarotonga, Mr Edward Brennan, on [EAM@rarotongan.co.ck](mailto:EAM@rarotongan.co.ck) or our Reservations & Front Office Manager on Rarotonga, Ms Ovaia Liew, [Res.Manager@rarotongan.co.ck](mailto:Res.Manager@rarotongan.co.ck).

On Aitutaki, our reservations team is back at work and can be contacted on [reservations@aitutakilagoonresort.co.ck](mailto:reservations@aitutakilagoonresort.co.ck). Rose Kareroa the Resort Manager at Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa can be contacted on [resort.manager@aitutakilagoonresort.co.ck](mailto:resort.manager@aitutakilagoonresort.co.ck) for any enquiries.

Over the next day or so the unfolding situation at Aitutaki will become clearer and we will be sure to update you accordingly.

Thank you again for your support.

Kia Manuia