

NIKOI  
PRIVATE ISLAND

CEMPEDAK  
PRIVATE ISLAND

# IMPACT REPORT

2024



Conservation • Community • Culture • Commerce



# INTRODUCTION

In 2024, our journey on Nikoi and Cempedak continued to be shaped by the people, places and principles that have always mattered most to us. From nesting turtles to education in the community, developing our farm to documenting ancient history, this impact report doesn't just track numbers, it tells stories. Stories of conservation efforts rooted in care and consistency, of partnerships that champion local communities, and of a way of doing business that prioritises purpose over profit.

As long-standing members of [The Long Run](#), a community of nature-based tourism businesses committed to balancing the 4Cs of Conservation, Community, Culture and Commerce, we remain guided by the belief that travel can be a force for good. The stories in this report are far from exhaustive, but they offer a window into the work we've done, the lessons we've learned, and the direction we're heading, always with a deep respect for the islands we call home.







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## A NOTE FROM ANDREW

When we first set out to build Nikoi and Cempedak, we didn't have a roadmap, just a strong sense of what mattered: protecting these islands, supporting local communities, and doing business in a way that felt fair and future-focused. Nearly two decades on, I'm proud to say that those values still guide us. And this past year, they've taken on new depth thanks to the people behind the scenes.

One of the highlights of 2024 for me has been the creation of a women's focus group within our team. A safe space for our female staff to come together, share their experiences, and drive initiatives that matter to them. It's a small but important step towards making sure our islands remain not just great places to visit, but great places to work, especially for women.

We've also welcomed new hires and promoted from within, with a particular focus on recognising leadership potential among our team. It's incredibly rewarding to see staff who joined us in junior roles many years ago now actively seeking out ways to drive positive change on the islands - often beyond the scope of their original roles.

And while we've always believed in collaboration, this year has been especially exciting in terms of external partnerships. From learning from Bintan-based historians to sharing these stories through visiting artists from the region, we've found new ways to celebrate and preserve the cultural richness of our surroundings.

Thanks for reading, and for supporting us on this journey.



**Andrew**

*CEO & Co-Founder of Nikoi and Cempedak Islands*





## CONSERVATION

Conserving the natural ecosystems in and around our islands is essential, not just for the success of our business, but for the communities who depend on them for their livelihoods and way of life.



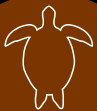
## TURTLE NESTS AND HATCHLINGS

2024 was our most successful turtle hatching season yet, with 2,497 hatchlings reaching the sea across Nikoi and Cempedak. This success is thanks to close collaboration between multiple departments - from Housekeeping and Reception to Kids Club and Security.

Nikoi in particular remains a key nesting site, recording 59 nests, 46 of which produced hatchlings. Out of the successful nests, 44 were from critically endangered Hawksbill Turtles, and 2 were from endangered Green Turtles. On Nikoi alone, 2,257 hatchlings were released, highlighting its vital role as a safe haven for turtles.

Given that Nikoi and Cempedak are private islands, poaching is thankfully not a threat to turtle nests. However, natural predators and flooding still pose significant risks. To protect the nests, we use specially designed barriers to shield them from sand crabs, monitor lizards, and other predators. The Security Team monitors for nests and nesting mothers overnight, while our Marine Biologists and volunteers oversee the programme.

When nests hatch, guests are invited to witness the event from a safe distance, as we strive to balance conservation with guest education.



**2,497**

Hatchlings successfully  
released





## IN HOUSE MARINE BIOLOGIST: MUTIA

In January 2024, Mutia joined us as our resident marine biologist on Cempedak, leading research and monitoring within the East Bintan Marine Protected Area (MPA). A big part of this is keeping an eye on water quality which, thankfully, has stayed relatively good, and running regular checks on coral health.

Mutia also engages guests through new citizen science activities, exploring the intertidal zone to discover sea cucumbers, crustaceans, eels, flatworms, and small fish. Her work supports ongoing research into a myriad of areas, including sea turtles, deepening our understanding of the island's marine ecosystems.



## SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER: HENDRY

Last year, we supported our Farm Manager, Hendry, to spend eight months training in regenerative farming and sustainable land management in Massachusetts. He returned in December full of fresh ideas, and has since been promoted to Sustainability Manager. Alongside running the farm, working on seed sovereignty and soil health, he now works across both islands focusing on our work with The Long Run and helping us strengthen our approach to long-term environmental stewardship across all departments.

*"Thanks to my time in America, I was able to further enhance my expertise in nutrient integrity and holistic land management. It is rewarding to now be able to collectively apply that here."*



## PERMACULTURE FARMING

In 2024, our farm on mainland Bintan continued to grow as both a productive food source and a hands-on learning hub. We harvested over 84,000 eggs and produced an average of 600kg of vegetables each month, reducing our reliance on external supply chains and strengthening food security for the islands.

Improvements to soil health were evident, with richer, darker earth replacing the region's usual red clay — a result of better crop rotation and the introduction of native flowering species that support pollination and biodiversity. Our Seed Sovereignty Project also made strides, halving seed procurement costs through careful saving, selection, and regeneration.

Education remained a key focus, with over 50 local children visiting the farm for workshops on composting and sustainable agriculture. We also introduced a new activity to the kids club on Nikoi, where children are invited to harvest produce from the island's permaculture garden. These sessions offer a fun, tactile way to learn about vegetables, seasonal growing, and the value of sourcing food locally — planting small seeds for a more thoughtful future.







## COMMUNITY

As custodians of a small part of the wider community, it is our responsibility to use our business to give back and support those who've cared for this place long before we arrived.





In 2024, Nikoi hosted The Island Foundation's Board and Management Team for their annual offsite. Our CEO and Co-Founder sits on the Board, one of our Co-Owners serves as the Director, and our Marketing Manager supports their communications efforts.



**598**  
Students  
enrolled



**1,260**  
Hours of teacher  
training provided



**13**  
Learning Centres in  
operation

## THE ISLAND FOUNDATION

The Island Foundation began in 2009 when our founders set up a registered charity in Singapore and Indonesia to support education and community development across Bintan and neighbouring islands. Since then, it has grown into a more professional and independent organisation with a focused mission: to improve educational opportunities for coastal and small island communities. Today, it operates with external funding, a dedicated team, and a measurable impact. We continue to support the Island Foundation through the Island Club (read more in the commerce section) and in-kind support.

At the core of its work is the Learning for Sustainability framework, which strengthens education ecosystems through three key pillars: Learning Centres, Teacher Training, and Community Engagement. The Learning Centres provide free, extra-curricular education designed specifically for small island and coastal communities, using a purpose-built curriculum that fosters the “Four Cs” – critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. These centres offer a safe, inclusive space for children to learn through project-based and experiential methods that reflect their local environment and cultural heritage.

In 2024, the Foundation operated 13 Learning Centres across the Riau Islands, delivering 2,294 classes and reaching 598 students with over 3,400 hours of interactive learning. Its teacher training program supported 335 educators with more than 1,260 training hours, including a significant expansion into Lingga Regency, home to many Indigenous Orang Suku Laut.







## GREEN LEADERS

The Green Leaders programme is our employee of the year initiative focused on encouraging practical, sustainability-driven ideas from all teams. Staff contribute suggestions to reduce waste, improve processes, and protect the environment. The winner leads the team to put these ideas into action.

In 2024, the Nikoi Green Leaders team took on a variety of projects. Wira from the bar developed “eco enzymes,” a liquid compost made from fermented palm sugar and fruit waste, while Bobby in housekeeping focused on replanting endangered santigi trees using coconut husks. Bruno from watersports trialed composting seaweed collected from the beaches, and Samsi in housekeeping experimented with a number of other liquid composting methods.

The 2024 winner, however was Rasi from our carpentry team, winning a cash prize, two night stay in one of our pool villas with his family and the opportunity to lead and develop the Green Leaders team. His project involved taking driftwood offcuts and crafting them into Jenga sets for the villas and the shop, significantly reducing wood waste in his department whilst also adding to the guest experience.

Today, Rasi earns additional income from the Jenga sales as he continues to make them in his own time. He also repurposed offcuts into Christmas trees, which were sold during the holiday season, alongside a guest workshops on how to make them.







## UPCYCLED BOTTLES, KITCHEN OIL CANDLES, WASTE SYRUPS AND CANDIES

The culture of grassroots sustainability continues to thrive across both islands, with staff consistently leading their own initiatives to repurpose materials, reduce waste, and find creative, low-impact solutions.

On Cempedak, Recreation Supervisor Atoy was named Employee of the Year for turning waste kitchen oil into mosquito-repellent candles, a method inspired by his grandmother and now used on dining tables island-wide.

On Nikoi, Reny transferred from Dining to Sustainability and started upcycling bottles into glassware and tea light holders. He is now also leading guest workshops to make their own.

Both bar teams have also been busy. Miko on Nikoi has created syrups from leftover wine and ground coffee for cocktails.

Meanwhile over on Cempedak, Rio started experimenting with turning surplus fruit into candies, by boiling them down into syrups before freezing.





## WOMENS' FOCUS GROUPS

In 2024, as part of our commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace, Ita, our newly appointed Chief Improvement Officer, initiated and led the first women's focus groups. Recognising that female staff remain a minority, these groups provide a confidential and supportive space focused on career development and wellbeing. There was a total of 42 participants who attended, spanning teams on Nikoi, Cempedak and our operations base. The sessions were positively used to share experiences, discuss challenges, and build a broader sense of community among women at all levels.

This initiative reflects our dedication to not only empowering female staff but also strengthening workplace culture overall. Planned as a bi-annual event, the groups will continue to evolve, supporting ongoing connection, growth, and inclusivity across the company.



## COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS

Last year, 11 trainees joined us from 6 different vocational colleges as part of their degree programmes; six on Nikoi and five on Cempedak. These students were able to acquire hands-on experience and invaluable contacts in the industry.

Placements spanned across five departments, developing local talent and nurturing the next generation of hospitality professionals.







## CULTURE

The culture of Bintan is rich and diverse, yet remains relatively undocumented and under-researched. We're working to change that by supporting initiatives that preserve local stories, traditions and ways of life before they're lost.



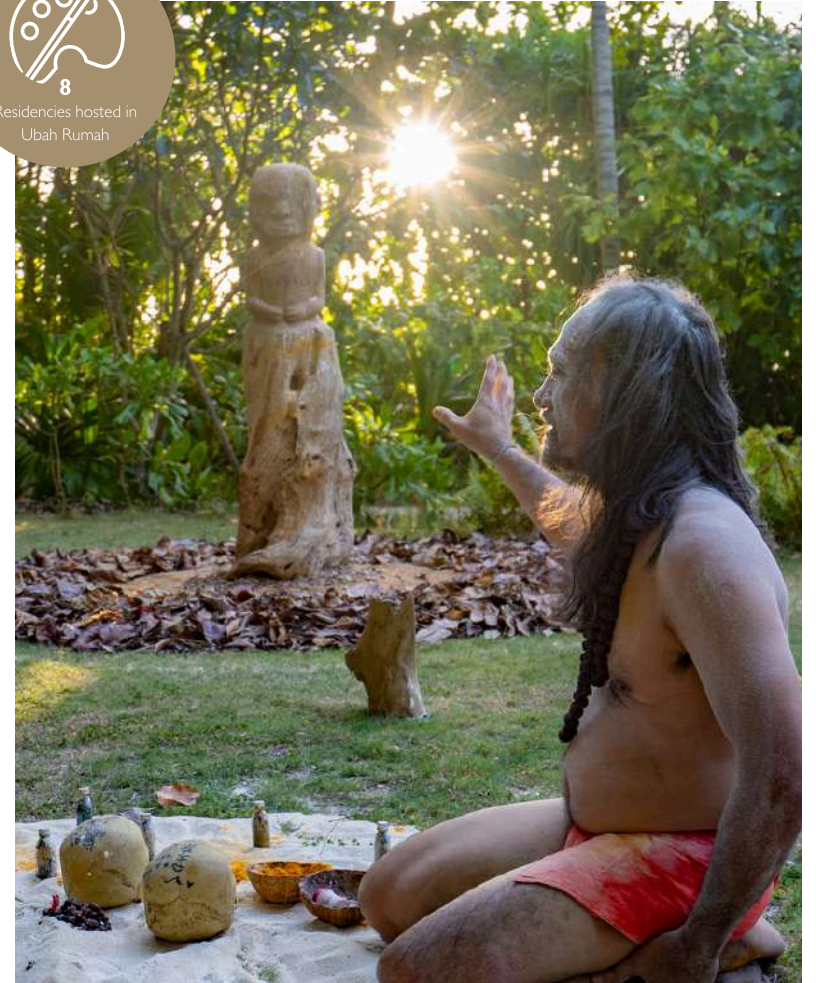
## UBAH RUMAH ARTIST RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Launched in 2022, Ubah Rumah is a creative residency and research programme based on Nikoi, designed to explore and document the cultural and ecological heritage of the Riau Archipelago. Co-founded by artists Alecia Yeo and Ernest Goh, the programme offers space for visiting artists, researchers, and writers to reflect, create, and engage with the local context - particularly the stories and traditions of the Indigenous Orang Laut community.

Residents stay in a purpose-built open-air studio and are encouraged to work slowly and collaboratively, with no set outcomes. Their work contributes to a growing digital archive that celebrates and safeguards the region's cultural knowledge.

In 2024, Ubah Rumah welcomed 12 artists and researchers across 8 residencies, representing 6 countries: Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, the Netherlands and France. Residents came from diverse disciplines - including visual art, anthropology, design, ecology, and storytelling, with each bringing their own lens to the cultural and ecological themes of the Riau Archipelago.

Throughout the year, artists collaborated with the island's team and surrounding communities, running workshops and hosting open studios. Several left behind works and ideas that continue to inspire - from a map of the island crafted from donated crystals to a six-foot hand carved driftwood sculpture. These exchanges deepened connections between disciplines, cultures, and generations, reinforcing Ubah Rumah's role as a growing platform for cultural preservation and creative exchange.



*'Unglo' by Florence Cinco, Manila-based multidisciplinary artist*





'Stitching Nikoi' by  
Lusianna Limono,  
Indonesian textile artist

'Spirit of Orang Laut' by  
Sakorn Wongratchasi, Thai  
mixed media artist



'Hikayat Bitan' by Gilles Massot,  
French multidisciplinary artist



'Resonance of the Forest' by  
Samantha Mintio,  
Singaporean photographer





## STAFF TRIP TO BINTAN BUKI BATU

As part of his Ubah Rumah residency, French artist and local history expert Gilles Massot led a profound staff visit to Bukit Batu cemetery on Bintan. This site is believed to be the final resting place of figures from the Sejarah Melayu, including Queen Wan Seri Beni, who is said to have crowned Sang Nila Utama, the legendary founder of Singapore. The cemetery also holds graves tied to local oral histories preserved by the late Pak Atan, its longtime guardian.

Originally proposed for guests, the team decided the visit would be more meaningful for staff, many of whom had expressed interest in the cultural significance. Unexpectedly, the gathering coincided with a local wedding, bringing together community members, including Pak Atan's family. The event became a heartfelt exchange across generations, reflecting the deep connections formed through shared history and culture.







## COMMERCE

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For us, responsible commerce means making thoughtful, values-driven decisions at every level of the business - from how we source and hire to how we plan for the long term. By staying financially stable and independently owned, we're able to continue supporting responsible tourism for years to come.



## ISLAND CLUB

The Island Club is our loyalty program whereby a donation to the Island Foundation is required to join and in return guests receive perks such as advance bookings, priority on our waitlist and invites to regular events in Singapore. The initiative continues to be a valuable bridge between our guests and The Island Foundation (TIF). In 2024 the Island Club raised over S\$20,000 for TIF. These donations came from 46 members and, given that 33 of these were renewals, 72% of contributions came from returning supporters. With an average donation of S\$500, twice the minimum requirement, we're grateful for the generosity of this community,



## STAFF LOANS

Our staff loan system is designed to provide safe, accessible financing for our team and, by extension, their communities. Rather than saving money, the focus is on offering a responsible alternative to risky borrowing, therefore helping staff avoid high-interest loans from informal lenders or loan sharks that can place families under long-term financial strain. Managed transparently and with clear repayment terms, the system ensures staff can access funds when needed without compromising their financial wellbeing. It's a simple initiative, but one that reflects our broader commitment to supporting long-term stability and trust.





## SEVEN CLEAN SEAS

In 2024, we launched a new partnership with Seven Clean Seas to tackle plastic waste more directly and transparently. Through this initiative, we track the amount of plastic used across operations on both Nikoi and Cempedak and offset it by purchasing credits that fund the removal of an equivalent amount of plastic from marine environments in Indonesia.

The goal is simple: take responsibility for the plastic we can't yet eliminate, while continuing to reduce our overall use. By measuring our consumption and investing in credible, local clean-up efforts, we're not just managing waste, we're actively contributing to healthier oceans and supporting an organisation with boots on the ground in our region.

In 2024, Cempedak offset 797kg of plastic and Nikoi offset 1,179kg, with costs of SGD \$2,328.19 and SGD \$3,441.64 respectively. Over the year, both islands saw a clear reduction in plastic waste - a sign that internal awareness and operational efforts are working.

When usage fell below estimates, the savings were redirected to our staff party fund, rewarding the team for helping cut down plastic across the islands. In total, these savings amounted to SGD \$219.09 for Cempedak and SGD \$752.21 for Nikoi - a small but meaningful way to celebrate collective progress.





## LOCAL EXPERT: ASTI

Asti is a cultural researcher and multimedia storyteller from Tanjung Pinang, with a background in spatial science. Passionate about preserving and promoting Malay culture in the Riau Islands, she weaves together history, environmental insight through her walking tours and creative projects.

In 2024, we began collaborating with Asti to offer guests guided cultural tours of Tanjung Pinang, as well as bringing her to Nikoi and Cempedak for storytelling sessions. These partnerships provide a meaningful way to support local enterprise, while deepening our guests' understanding of the cultural and ecological richness of the region.

*“By combining education and engaging storytelling, I strive to ensure that cultural knowledge is not only preserved, but also becomes the basis for sustainable living practices.”*







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