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## SAVING THE WORD ONE PERSON AT A TIME: RECONNECTING PORT MORESBY WITH PNG ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE

By

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### ABSTRACT

Since 2012, *Port Moresby Nature Park* has risen like a phoenix from the ashes of what was the NCDC Botanical Gardens. Ultimately still linked to the city's governing Board, it now primarily operates under an independent Board of Directors and has maintained a steadfast Vision for the past 10 years as the guardians of *Papua New Guinea's fauna flora*, and more recently *culture. Education*, in all formats is intrinsically linked to this Vision and, by nature of the facility, involves internal and external public engagement, formal school programs, staff capacity building, as well as general business practices.

Shirley Mogi has played a key role in this facility's transformation and is now the education manager at Port Moresby Nature Park. Shirley provides an outline of the challenges and victories that accompany being a local woman in a developing, largely tribal based culture and leading a team to provide programs that highlight *biodiversity and culture* in a part of the world that is key to preserve if we are to successfully battle climate change. Reshaping the way many Papua New Guineas see and use their natural environment needs to be carefully delivered, encouraging the little changes made every day by everyone as the actual keystones to saving the planet, as opposed to someone else fixing the issues and highlighting the opportunity to be part of the solution instead of the problem. There are wider complexities to also consider such as the conundrum of 'tribal headdress versus endangered species', and that natural resources are a 'privilege for all' rather than a 'right for just a few'. The overarching message however, remains the same; 'protecting what we have' is far better than 'replacing what we have lost'. She shares the journey and the workings of some of the programs currently provided at the Nature Park.

### BIOGRAPHY

Ms Shirley Mogi, Education Manager has been with Port Moresby Nature Park for eight years and has been extensively trained and supported by the Education Department of Zoos Victoria, Australia via the Sister Zoo arrangement between the facilities. She also holds a Certificate IV in Early Childcare Development from APTC, in Fiji and was offered a scholarship opportunity by the International Educators Association. Unfortunately, the latter was placed on hold due to Covid 19 however it is hoped this can be reinvigorated in the near future.