

IMPACT REPORT

18 – 22 AUGUST 2025
In partnership with the MAFF

OUR TEAM

VETERINARIANS Lead Vet Mariska Chalmers, Helga Campbell, Diane Fraser, Linka van Heerden

VET NURSES Belinda Battersby, Molly Lines, Tiaan Tamahaga, Fiona Wallis

CLINIC OUTCOMES

Desexing – dogs	127	Clinic hours total	48
Desexing – cats	22	Vet volunteer hours	192
Complex surgeries	6	Vet nurse volunteer hours	192
General medical cases	370	Admin volunteer hours	80
Parvovirus vaccines	275	Volunteer flights	8
Parasite treatments	1,500	TOTAL ANIMALS TREATED	525

CLINIC VALUE **NZ\$218,166**

The calculation is based on SPAW costs, donated products, administrative expenses, and professional services. While SPAW does not charge for services, donations are welcomed.

LEAD VET COMMENTARY

The August SPAW trip to Tokomololo was a true testament to collaboration and care. Our team of eight phenomenal volunteers – four vets and four nurses – partnered with long-standing supporters MAFF, as well as a vet and vet nurse team based in Tonga representing Volunteer Services Abroad (VSA).

MAFF's support continues to be invaluable. They not only provided clinic facilities, but also mobilised on-island volunteers who served as receptionists, translators and recovery assistants – bringing warmth and efficiency to every aspect of the clinic.

Over the course of the week, 525 animals were seen, with 155 receiving surgery. While many procedures were routine desexing, our team's trauma surgery expertise meant we could also respond to complex cases – including stitch-ups, a leg amputation and a dog suffering from sepsis due to metritis. That dog even received ultrasonography thanks to the skill of a SPAW vet and equipment provided by VSA.

The clinic ran seamlessly, with VSA contributing not only to consultations but also to behind-the-scenes essentials including laundry, lunch coordination and daily logistics. Their support helped keep the team energised and focused.

MAFF staff deeply impressed our volunteers with their commitment and capability. One nurse even remarked that their kit-wrapping skills rival some of the best clinics back home!

The week concluded with a beautiful show of community spirit – a joint BBQ attended by VSA, MAFF and SPAW. There was ice cream, music, laughter – and just a touch of dancing. It felt like the beginning of a new on-island tradition.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who made this week such a success – MAFF and VSA for their tireless support and hospitality, TAWS for promoting clinic hours, local police for assisting with animal transport and the admin team in New Zealand who volunteer time all year around to keep SPAW functioning.

Together, we created something truly special.

Mariska Chalmers
Lead Veterinarian



VOLUNTEER STORY

Volunteering with SPAW for the first time was an incredibly rewarding experience. It was a privilege to help the animals in Tonga and witness the impact our work had on the local community.

I first heard about SPAW when Siobhan Marshall appeared on Celebrity Treasure Island and I've followed the organisation ever since – watching teams head abroad and dreaming of joining one myself. At the time I didn't feel I had enough experience, so I held back. But when I saw a post calling for volunteers for the upcoming year, and with my colleague Diane's strong encouragement, I put my name forward.

Originally I wasn't on this trip but when someone pulled out, I was offered a spot – and it happened to be the same trip my colleague Diane was on, which was perfect. We

work really well together, as a vet and vet nurse team, and that made the experience even more special.

The other volunteers all collaborated beautifully and we all learned something along the way. My favourite part was seeing the joy on the faces of locals when they came to collect their animals after surgery – healthy, safe and loved.

I'd absolutely love to volunteer with SPAW again. My first trip left a lasting impression, and I'm so grateful to have been part of it.

Tiaan Tamahaga
Vet Nurse



COMPLEX CASES

During this clinic, the SPAW team provided critical surgical interventions for animals requiring complex care. These procedures were far from routine – they addressed severe injuries, complex conditions and life-threatening infections. In many cases, they were life-saving. In all cases, they dramatically improved the animal's comfort, mobility and quality of life.

From reconstructive jaw surgery and challenging desexing to amputations and emergency wound management, each case reflected the team's skill, compassion and commitment to delivering care that would otherwise be inaccessible. These moments are a powerful reminder of why SPAW exists—and the difference expert veterinary care can make.



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