

SPAW VAVA'U

IMPACT REPORT

 27 OCTOBER-1 NOVEMBER
 2025

In partnership with
Host-a-Vet Vava'u


OUR TEAM

VETERINARIANS
VET NURSES
Team Lead Dr Geoff Neal; Dr Olivia Hunter, Dr Sarah Rusin
 Wendy Richardson, Bubbles Otway

CLINIC OUTCOMES

Desexing – dogs	130	Parasite treatments	830
Desexing – cats	22	Clinic hours total	48
Additional Surgeries	6	Vet volunteer hours	148.5
General medical cases	109	Vet nurse volunteer hours	96
Livestock	22	Admin volunteer hours	80
Parvovirus vaccines	190	Volunteer flights	4
TOTAL ANIMALS TREATED			289

CLINIC VALUE
NZ\$180,000

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 2025 Vava'u clinic marked a new milestone for SPAW - delivering the highest number of consults, surgeries and overall animal treatments ever achieved in a single week across the islands of Vava'u. A total of 289 animals either visited our clinic or we went to them in their homes if they were too unwell or if their location meant travelling to the clinic was problematic. House visits are generally conducted prior to the official clinic start, or after it finishes, if our vet team is able to stay on island for an additional day or two.

This remarkable outcome reflects not only SPAW's unwavering commitment to returning each year, but also the tireless dedication and coordination of our island partners, Host-a-Vet Vava'u. Their behind-the-scenes efforts throughout the year made everything easy.

This year, the SPAW team was fortunate to experience the true warmth and generosity of the Vava'u community firsthand. From day trips to stunning nearby islands on our rest day to meals and provisions gifted throughout the week, the hospitality was amazing. At the clinic, neighbours became taxi drivers for one another – ensuring animals made it to their appointments. The spirit of collaboration and care was palpable.

Together, we achieved something truly special for the people and animals of Vava'u. Thank you to everyone who made it happen.

Dr Geoff Neal BVSc
 Lead Veterinarian


VOLUNTEER STORY

This was my third SPAW trip and it left me buzzing and already wanting to return. The SPAW team I worked with on Vava'u were experienced, respectful and a joy to be around. Huge credit to SPAW for assembling such a fantastic group.

The Host-a-Vet team on Vava'u were exceptional and the clinic ran like a well-oiled machine. Their systems for admissions and discharges were seamless and their communication and teamwork made our clinic run effortlessly. They had the MAFF complex set up before we arrived, and even arranged daily lunches from local businesses – often enough to cover dinner too. Several restaurants offered generous discounts and thanks to

Kirsty at Mounu Island Resort, we enjoyed a blissful day of snorkelling and a chef-prepared lunch.

After 5.5 days of clinic work, we spent two nights unwinding at Mystic Sands and Tongan Beach Resort, both of which kindly offered heavily discounted accommodation. It was the perfect way to relax after a busy week.

Throughout the trip, I felt truly valued and respected by everyone involved.

I honestly couldn't have asked for more.

Bubbles Otway

Vet Nurse



FAREWELL TO OUR CANINE FRIEND OXY



In 2011, a little abandoned puppy took a tumble from a veranda in Vava'u and broke his leg. Fortunately, a small volunteer team of vets and vet nurses from SPAW were on the island at the time and were able to help.

Oxy, as the puppy was to become known as, was adopted by expat locals Paul and Karen, who gave him a loving home and attended to his care. Oxy's leg healed well and he went on to enjoy his years in Vava'u with his adopted family. This family was Paul and Karen but also included Oxy's canine family members – Niki, Nuke and Loki – with whom he would play with.

Oxy was a regular attendee when our SPAW teams visited Vava'u and he was well known to many of our volunteers.

His bold personality and big voice were always present. As he aged the personality remained, but arthritis began to take a toll on Oxy's mobility. Oxy's family managed his aging and mobility issues with care, compassion and medications from SPAW to keep him as happy and as mobile as he could be.

In November 2025, after the SPAW Vava'u clinic had wound up, Oxy had his final SPAW visit. A house call provided by one of the SPAW vets, where at the age of 14, Oxy was able to peacefully pass away, surrounded by the people who had loved him for his lifetime.

Rest in love, Oxy. Your story is a reminder of why SPAW exists – and the positive difference we can make to an animal's life in remote island locations.



HOST-A-VET VAVA'U AND MAFF

We send our heartfelt thanks to Bo, Tracey and Lena from Host-a-Vet. Their co-ordination of this annual clinic through the year made for a seamless week and the most successful Vava'u mission to date. They fundraise year around to help SPAW fund the clinic. This year Host-a-Vet contributed just over TP\$5,000 covering the SPAW teams flights from Tongatapu, customs fees and some cleaning supplies for the clinic. We also had good conversations with Lua and Ela from MAFF about how we can assist with their livestock efforts on Vava'u.



We also acknowledge Adrian from Mango Cafe, Caryl and Andrew from Kraken Restaurant, Milo and Mario from the Bellavista Café, Natalie from the Harbourview

Restaurant, Bob and Julie, Natalie, Adrian, Glenn and Vanessa from Bubbles Laundry, Cindy at Coffee & Tees and the Neiafu Police for their kindness during the week.

