

OVER 500 DOGS & CATS DESEXED IN FIRST EVER ANIMAL BALANCE CAMPAIGN

The Animal Protection Society recently completed their biggest ever desexing campaign, which was run in conjunction with a group of 18 overseas volunteers representing Animal Balance, a US-based Animal Welfare organisation.

The campaign ran from Wednesday 24th February through until Wednesday 10th March. Over this 2 week period, a total of 12 free clinics were conducted with a record 584 dogs and cats being desexed! To put this figure in perspective, this is about half the number of animals desexed by the APS vets over the entire previous 12 month period, despite continual growth of their year-round desexing program over recent years! In addition, on Wednesday 3rd March an incredible 71 animals were desexed at the Samoa Tourism Authority fale in just one day, setting a new record for both Animal Protection Society and Animal Balance!

Using knowledge of population growth, the APS has conservatively estimated that if left undesexed, the 178 female dogs that were spayed during the campaign would have contributed more than 4000 additional dogs to the Samoan dog population in just 6 years time!

Such intensive desexing campaigns, where large numbers of animals can be sterilized in a short period of time, hold the key to a humane solution to the dog overpopulation problem that is rife in Samoa, and particularly the Apia town area. Animal Balance has proved this through successful projects in other island nations, such as the Galapagos Islands where dog populations have stabilised thanks to over 95% of the dog population being sterilised in just a few years of campaigning by Animal Balance. As part of this Samoan campaign the team of volunteers focused on working in identified problem areas, but it is hoped that in future campaigns, more rural clinics, including in Savai'i, will be possible.

Funding for this visit, which cost \$10000USD to run, was met in half by a donation from the Samoa Tourism Authority and in half by Animal Balance fundraising efforts overseas. Animal Balance, who has signed an Memorandum of Understanding with Animal Protection Society and 5 Samoan government ministries (STA, MAF, MNRE, NHS, MOH and Police), intends to make this project an annual one, with the next visit already tentatively planned for mid-2011, dependent on funding. (Like the APS, Animal Balance is a non-profit non-government organisation.) Any local businesses or ministries who would like to become involved in this project in the future are most welcome and should contact the Animal Protection Society (aps.samoa@gmail.com) for more information.

Apart from funding, this project took months to get off the ground and would not have been possible without the support of all the local Samoan government ministries, businesses and individuals who volunteered their expertise, time, services or money to help maximize the success of the project. We regret that we can not list everyone here in this press release, but fa'afetai tele lava to you all! We will endeavour to include a full list of those who assisted with the project in our next edition of "The Howler" in the Sunday Samoan. And, from the entire Animal Protection Society team we would also like to say a big fa'afetai lava to everyone who brought their dogs and cats along to the clinics to be

desexed – you are what made this campaign the success it was and we are eternally grateful for such overwhelming community support!

While the APS clinic was temporarily closed during the Animal Balance project, the clinic has now re-opened for normal business (Monday to Friday, 9am-3pm). We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused and appreciate the understanding of our valued clients. If you would like to make a booking at the APS clinic to see a vet or just want to pop in for all your pet care needs, please call the APS on 22403 or visit us at the clinic at the MAF compound in Avele.