



August 2011

“Greetings Member Society

Welcome to Member Society Oceania news. Another update from our Member Society Network Oceania, **there has been some amazing achievements in the region, particularly the Esther Honey Foundation in the Cook Islands reaching their target of desexing 70 percent of Rarotonga's dog population. A fantastic result and testament to their commitment to the islands animals.”**

Cate Edwards

Member Society Development Manager

Esther Honey Foundation reaches desexing target

More than 15 years of veterinary care with an emphasis on making spay/neuter available to every family and every cat and dog has made a significant difference in the health and number of Cook Islands animals. The Esther Honey Foundation has now treated 30,000 animals and has desexed more than 12,500 dogs and cats.

Before the Foundation came to the Cook Islands, they were advised that there were 6,000 dogs and 8,000 cats on Rarotonga. In 2010, 26 Esther Honey Foundation volunteers spent 93 days going door to door island-wide counting all dogs, recording the number who were desexed, were intact or were of indeterminate status.

This census confirmed that the Foundation's spay/neuter program has reduced the number of dogs on Rarotonga to 2,000 with 78% of that number desexed. Sterilizing 70% will stabilize street dog populations and sterilizing more than 70% brings a steep reduction with numbers continuing to decline as long as the desexing program remains available.

"One of the most rewarding aspects," said President and CEO, Cathy Sue Ragan-Anunsen, "is that we were able to achieve this goal without killing healthy animals."

The Foundation hopes that their results will encourage other nations in the region to begin their own 70% programs. "If we had not been the only agency in the country providing full veterinary and shelter services," said Ragan-Anunsen, "we could have met this objective in a fraction of the time, and others could too."

