


VSA Assignment Description

Assignment Title	Veterinary Clinic Mentor
Assignment Modality	Standard
Assignment Number	41994
Country	Solomon Islands
Location	Honiara
Partner Organisation	Honiara Veterinary Clinic and Surgery
Duration	12 months
Sustainable Development Goals	

1. Partner Organisation Overview

The Honiara Veterinary Clinic and Surgery (HVCS) was formed over 30 years ago by a local veterinarian. The purpose of the veterinary is to support animal health and welfare in the country, provide basic animal health services, and educate people on zoonotic diseases and public health risks. The veterinary is in Chinatown.

Currently HVCS conducts surgeries including desexing to reduce the stray dog population in Honiara; they treat illnesses and/or injuries that pets have. The HVCS also supports farm management by retailing products such as iron supplements and vitamins for chickens and pigs. They also provide information on animal health and wellbeing to help farmers to safeguard their livelihoods. HVCS also does some education talks in schools and provides advice to Honiara City Council when asked.

Over the past few years the dog population, particularly in Honiara has continued to grow. There is no care for the dogs on the streets. Some move in packs which can be threatening to residents and those who wish to exercise or who are walking alone. People who own pets cannot always afford to take their pets to the only vet service in Honiara.

HVCS currently has three staff including a manager and two aides. Vet services are currently limited because the only qualified veterinarian is currently studying and travels regularly to offer services. The HVCS is seeking assistance to ensure that it is set up in a way that will ensure services are run professionally and that the skills of the staff are enhanced.

2. Assignment Overview

A VSA volunteer is being sought to work alongside staff at the HVCS. The volunteer will, with staff, identify areas of strength to strengthen what is working well, and work on improving areas that are not going well particularly in animal management and welfare. The volunteer vet will work with staff on collaborative efforts with Honiara City Council to manage the dog population in Honiara through a sterilisation programme. Farmers will also receive support with their livestock.

3. Goal/Outcomes/Outputs

Goal

Honiara has veterinary services and healthy animals in and out of homes.

Outcome 1

Aspects of the veterinary clinic that can be improved and areas for staff development are identified.

- Observe how staff in the clinic work and the type of services they offer to the public.
- Review processes and systems of the clinic.
- Gain understanding of what else the vet might be doing using available resources.
- Provide a report with recommendations of what improvements can be made in the clinic and staff development.

Outcome 2

Staff at the vet clinic are trained and changes are made to ensure the vet clinic runs efficiently.

- Create training materials
- Train staff on clinical and administrative processes for sterilisation programme.
- Support staff to make changes within the vet clinic to gain efficiencies and ensure animal health and wellbeing
- Support staff to create resources to provide to farmers and pet owners on care of animals
- Create links and networks with other vet services in the pacific region for ongoing support.

Outcome 3

Reduction in the number of stray dogs and pets in Honiara.

- Liaise and work with Honiara City Council on a sterilisation programme.
- Provide information on the sterilisation programme.
- Sterilisation of dogs at the vet clinic to cull numbers.

4. Reporting, Working Relationships and Capacity Building

- The volunteer will work with staff in the vet clinic on a day-to-day basis. They will start by understanding the strengths of individual staff and as a team and support them through training, coaching and mentoring to build their skills. The volunteer will report and be accountable to the HVCS manager.

As needs on the ground may change over time, the volunteer is encouraged to review and update the Assignment Description on arrival in consultation with the partner organisation and VSA Programme Manager. By their very nature, development situations can involve significant change, so it is advisable that the volunteer periodically reviews and reflects on the Assignment Description throughout the Assignment to ensure the best development outcomes are being achieved.

5. Selection Criteria/Position Requirements

Professional Specifications

Essential

- Qualification in veterinary science.
- At least two years' experience working as a vet

Desirable

- Prior experience providing mentoring to other vets and trainees.
- Prior experience working in a similar role in the Pacific region.
- Ability to create networks
- Ability to mobilise resources for use in a vet clinic and/or training of staff

Personal Specifications

Essential

- Willingness to learn and speak Pijin
- Ability to work with minimal resources
- Creativity
- Flexibility and patience
- Culturally sensitive

6. VSA Essential Attributes

- Commitment to volunteering, to VSA and to the partner organisation
- Cross cultural awareness
- Adaptability and a willingness to approach change or newness positively
- Able to form good relationships, both personally and professionally, with work colleagues and in the community
- Resilience and an ability to manage setbacks
- Initiative and resourcefulness
- An ability to facilitate learning through skills exchange

7. Country Context

For more information about Solomon Islands see [VSA in Solomon Islands](#)

8. Living and Working Situation

Honiara is the business centre of Solomon Islands and as such is a melting pot for people from all the island groups that make up the diverse nation. A hot and dusty place, Honiara offers most facilities albeit in a rudimentary form. You are strongly encouraged to build relationships in the local community and socialise with Solomon Islanders at every opportunity, as this will enrich your experience of living in Solomons. However, entertainment options can be few and far between so there is also a very active expatriate social scene. There are various clubs and social groups in Honiara, which you will get to know with time.

VSA will provide basic, furnished accommodation with gas facilities for cooking. In Honiara, you will have access to power (although power outages can occur), phone, internet, piped water, restaurants, a variety of shops and a large expatriate population. Public transport is very cheap within Honiara. The local bus service is provided by a plethora of vans, and some larger buses. A single fare of SBD3 applies, regardless of the length of the trip. Taxis charge a moderate fare (currently SBD10 per kilometre) but it is wise to establish a fare before commencing a journey.

Most volunteers feel safe in Solomon Islands, but it is important to know the risks and take personal responsibility for your safety. As in many countries, foreigners tend to be the target of petty crime, so always be alert and take precautions. In general, there are no problems moving around the majority of Honiara during the day, but it is not safe to walk or catch public transport alone in Honiara after dark.

The office is located in Chinatown which is not far from a supermarket and is a 10-minute walk to the main road. Since the last riots in November 2021 in Chinatown there are now less businesses that operate in Chinatown. There has been quiet since then. People are not the target of such riots so personal safety is not an issue. The office is lockable and safe.

Additional Information

Residency status

VSA volunteers must be New Zealand citizens or have New Zealand permanent residency status, and currently living in NZ.

Pre-departure briefing

As part of the volunteer's contract, successful candidates will be required to take part in a pre-departure briefing course run by VSA in Wellington and complete all required pre-reading.

Final appointment

Final appointment will be subject to satisfactory medical and immigration clearances (costs covered by VSA), partner organisation acceptance, and successful completion of the pre-departure briefing course.

Family status

VSA supports partners to accompany volunteers on assignments of six months or longer. However, volunteers with accompanying dependents will not be considered for this assignment.

Fundraising

Volunteers are encouraged to fundraise at least \$1000 with the support of VSA's fundraising team. Accompanying partners are encouraged to raise the same amount. All funds raised will help VSA keep its programmes in action and support future volunteers.

Vaccination requirements

Potential volunteers are advised that VSA's insurers require volunteers to be inoculated, prior to departure, in accordance with the instructions of VSA's medical adviser. VSA covers the cost of any required vaccinations.

Children's Act

While on assignment, VSA volunteers may be required to work with children and/or may choose to participate in informal activities in their own time that involve interactions with children (such as coaching teams or teaching English). VSA is committed to the protection of vulnerable children and adults, which also includes meeting our commitment under the Children's Act 2014.

The information requested during the application process is necessary to assist VSA to determine applicant suitability to work and/or interact regularly with children and is part of a series of pre-selection checks undertaken on all applicants for VSA assignments.

Volunteer package

The volunteer's package includes the following:

Reimbursements and grants

1. The volunteer may be entitled to an establishment grant to help them set up in their country of assignment, and a location grant for rest and recuperation (R & R) purposes. These grants depend on the length and location of the assignment. The volunteer's contract will specify any grant entitlements.
2. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of SBD 7,500.

Accommodation

Basic, comfortable furnished accommodation will be sourced by VSA. For security purposes volunteers in Honiara should expect to share accommodation.

Airfares and baggage allowance

VSA will provide the volunteer with economy airfares to and from New Zealand for their assignment plus a baggage allowance.

Insurance

VSA will provide travel insurance to cover baggage and personal property, and non-routine medical expenses for the duration of the assignment. Further details of the insurance cover will be provided during the volunteer pre-departure briefing.

Utilities

VSA will reimburse volunteers reasonable expenses for household utilities while on assignment.

Final terms and conditions relating to the specific volunteer assignment will be confirmed in a personalised volunteer contract.