



6th of May 2025

Handover of 14 seater van by the Yazaki Kizuna Foundation to the Sosaiete Fa'asao o Samoa.

Today, May 6 was an important day for the Sosaiete Faasao o Samoa (SFS) as we were formally gifted a 14 seater van and audio visual equipment by the Yazaki Kizuna Foundation (YKF), a Japanese foundation.

In a small ceremony at the Vailima Botanical Gardens (VBG), representatives from YKF formally handed over the van and audio visual equipment to SFS. The event was beautifully blessed by Leilua Tipamaa Faleafaga Toni Tipamaa of SFS and the van was decorated by the Cash for Work team coordinated by Lotomaulalo Levi.

Su'emalo Talie Foliga, ACEO of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, was the MC for the event and welcomed everyone to VBG. Su'emalo thanked YKF for their generosity and SFS for the important and enduring partnership with MNRE for many years.

Kitami san, Managing Director of YKF, noted the importance of environmental education and thanked SFS for its conservation outreach work across Samoa. He explained that Japan like Samoa, is an island country surrounded by rich seas and about 70% of its land is forested and there are also many endemic species. He stressed that the need to build the understanding of the importance of nature is shared by both countries and the key role that environmental awareness has to foster pride and respect for Samoa's beautiful natural heritage.

Kitami san further explained the meaning of the Japanese word "Kizuna", which means the "bond" between people, and that the name of the Foundation reflects the desire to connect Japan and Samoa, connect Samoan people, and to support the development of Samoa.

Mr Afia James Atherton, President of SFS, noted that the van symbolizes the strengthening and further consolidation of the well established bond between the Yazaki Kizuna Foundation and the SFS. He noted that the van will improve our

"Kizuna" or bond with Samoan communities by making it that much easier to transport people to various awareness and field events. He noted that the double can pickup that was gifted by YKF in November 2023 was being well used by SFS for field work across Samoa and that the new van and audio-visual equipment would also be well looked after and for their intended purpose.

The event finished with a ribbon cutting and a viewing of the van and audio visual equipment to be used for training and outreach activities.

After the event the team went to visit the first QR panel on the Mt Vaea Digital Nature Trail, a new digital nature trail designed to raise environmental awareness of the biological and geographical features of Mt Vaea and a fitting place to end the handover event.

For more information about the Yazaki Kizuna Foundation please visit:
<https://www.yazaki-kizuna.jp/en/>

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