



**Laidlaw Undergraduate Research  
and Leadership Program Laidlaw Foundation**

**IMPERIAL**

**Imperial College London**



*Crazy Cat Lady in Sydney:  
Working with SAFE Rehoming  
(Week 3-4 Report)*

**Rong Hua**

Leadership in Action

Summer in 2025

## About SAFE

SAFE Rehoming, formally called Sydney's Animals For Everyone (SAFE), is a not-for-profit charity devoted to rescuing and rehoming animals. The group was created in 2017, after the AWL Ingleside shelter closed, when staff and local supporters united to continue rescuing animals. Between 2017 and 2019, SAFE relied on a foster care network to house cats and dogs. In August 2019, SAFE Haven was opened in Roseville, offering a dedicated space for cats awaiting adoption along with quality boarding services.

Unlike many organisations, SAFE receives no financial support from councils or government. Instead, it survives thanks to the generosity of the community. Its work includes taking in surrendered pets or animals found by the public, ensuring every animal is microchipped, desexed, vaccinated, health-checked, and treated, and then carefully matching them with new families.

Through the years, SAFE has developed a loyal base of volunteers and donors and gained a strong reputation, including a 5-star Google rating and recognition as a finalist in the Pet Rescue/Jetpets Outstanding Animal Shelter Awards in both 2020 and 2022. By April 2025, more than 2,000 animals had been successfully placed into loving homes. Beyond its role as a shelter, SAFE Rehoming has become a compassionate community where people come together to improve the lives of animals in need.



*Figure 1. Callie and Rosie in Shelter (Bonded Pair, Daughter (left) and Mother (right))*

# My Work

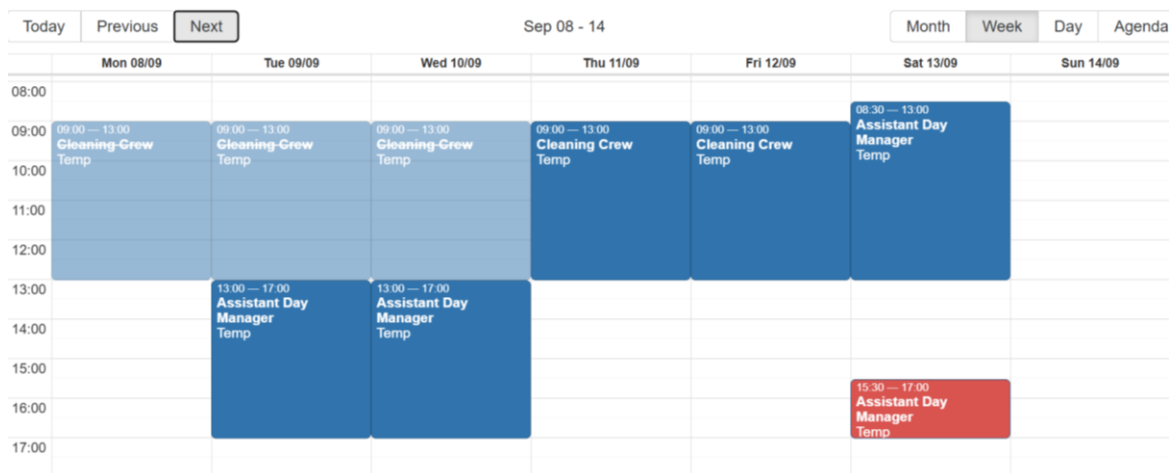


Figure 2. My Work Schedule on September 8th -14th

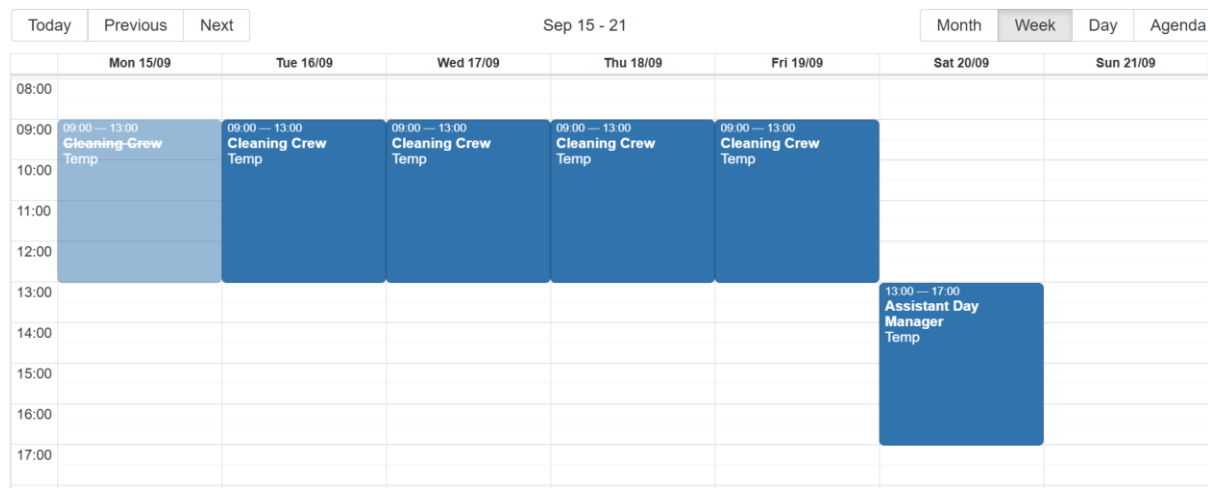


Figure 3. My Work Schedule on September 15th -21st

I continued my cleaning shifts over the past two weeks and became more familiar with the procedures. While cleaning, I also had the opportunity to monitor each cat’s health condition. Three kittens that had just returned from desexing showed symptoms of diarrhoea, vomiting, and loss of appetite, which are signs that suggested potential health issues. I promptly raised these concerns with the day manager, who then arranged vet appointments for them. Unfortunately, the kittens were later diagnosed with feline panleukopenia, a highly contagious viral disease. Normally, this illness can be prevented with the F3 vaccination. However, many cats in the shelter remain unvaccinated, including newborn kittens, nursing mothers, immune-compromised cats, and those too fearful to be safely vaccinated.

To minimise the risk of spreading the disease, the shelter introduced a no-contact policy. A communication system I had previously suggested proved helpful in this situation: all volunteer group chats were brought into a WhatsApp community, with a pinned

Announcements group at the top. The admin used this channel to share the new policy and explain the circumstances. Although not every volunteer had been added yet, information was quickly passed on during shifts, which significantly improved communication efficiency.

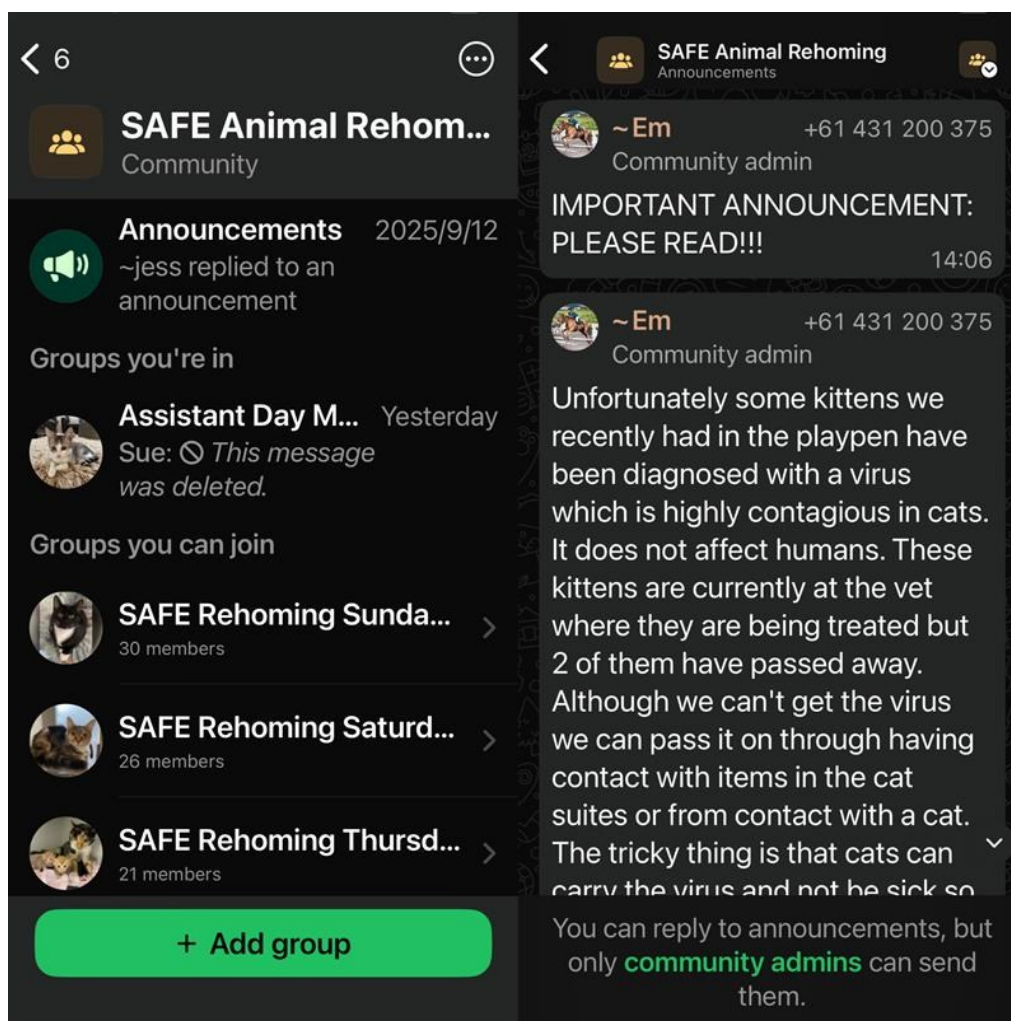


Figure 4. SAFE WhatsApp Community

During my daily shifts, I noticed that all the cats eating Hill's Prescription Diet z/d dry food (a prescription diet for cats with food allergies and intolerances) began showing allergic reactions, including severe tear stains and scratch marks from excessive itching. After investigating, I discovered that the z/d food had run out and Royal Canin Veterinary Diet Anallergenic food had been added to the food tank instead. However, it had previously been confirmed that Anallergenic should not be used as a substitute for z/d in this shelter. This mistake occurred because an outdated version of the feeding instruction sheet had been mistakenly posted above the feeding table.

I quickly raised the issue during the weekly meeting with Sue, one of the day managers, and the problem was resolved immediately: a new version of the feeding

instructions was posted, and Prue, another kind and helpful assistant day manager, purchased a new bag of Hypo-allergenic food to use until the online order of z/d food arrived.

On 12th September, a lovely pair of kittens, India and China, were adopted. They were the first pair of cats I successfully rehomed while working as an assistant day manager. This adorable bonded pair, a brother and sister, are affectionate and full of energy. Helping these little fluffy angels find a loving home gave me an incredible sense of joy and satisfaction.

**India & China**  
Two beautiful kittens  
Female Domestic Medium Hair (DMH) Cat

Donate directly to India & China  
PRINT AN ADOPTION POSTER

**India & China**  
Snuggle buddies

**About India & China**  
India & China are a stunning 4-month-old kittens. India is a ginger and white boy, with a soft coat and China is a fluffy tabby and white girl.

Enquire about India & China  
RESCUE GROUP  
SAFE Rehoming

Figure 5. Adoption Advertisement of India and China on the Pet Rescue Website

## My Reflection

Although we arranged vet appointments as quickly as possible for the kittens diagnosed with feline panleukopenia, two of them sadly passed away at the clinic. This was heartbreaking news. It serves as a powerful reminder that we must strictly follow all shelter protocols, whether during cleaning, feeding, or washing, to minimise the risk of cross-contamination and protect the health of every cat in our care