



**Laidlaw Undergraduate Research  
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**IMPERIAL**

**Imperial College London**



*Crazy Cat Lady in Sydney:*

*Working with SAFE Rehoming*

*Summary*

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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.

In this summary, I want to acknowledge some wonderful staff in SAFE.

## **SAFE People**

### **1. Animal Behaviourists**

Sue and Tim are the two Day Managers at SAFE, and they're also experienced animal behaviourists. They're the brains of the shelter, overseeing every detail — from monitoring each cat's health to handling documentation and coordinating communication within the committee.

They're among the most caring people I've ever met. Whenever Lola, a cat adopted by SAFE, decided to sit right on the laptop keyboard they were about to use, they never pushed her away like I would do to my own cat. Instead, they'd gently offer her a few pieces of Z/D dry cat food, encouraging her to walk away on her own terms. This is a thoughtful gesture that suited her special diet and kept her weight under control. Tim even keeps two chairs in his office: if Lola claims one, he simply smiles, gives it up to her, and takes the other. They truly respect every cat in the shelter and love them all equally.

I can still picture Sue sitting at the reception desk, typing an introduction for Gimli, an adorable orange cat who loved to rub against people, carefully choosing every single word. She wrote each sentence with genuine affection. Every Wednesday morning, she would gather all the volunteers, cheerfully announce how many cats had been adopted that week or month, and share heartwarming or funny saying about cats — all lovingly recorded in her fluffy pink notebook.

## 2. Assistant Day Managers

Assistant Day Managers are responsible for feeding, administering medication, supervising, and facilitating adoptions. They follow a strict feeding schedule, providing meals up to six times a day depending on each cat's classification. All of them are volunteers — and truly remarkable people.

Charley is one of the most impressive among them. She volunteers three days a week and is also a talented photographer, contributing many of the adorable photos featured on the adoption page. Her dedication and passion for cats have won everyone's admiration.

Rish is another devoted cat lover. Despite working six days a week, he still volunteers on his only day off. I truly admire his perseverance and kind heart.

Both Sharon and Laurinda have trained me extensively. Sharon is a disciplined and detail-oriented lady who follows every procedure with precision. Yet, she melts when it comes to the cats — even when the mischievous pair of black cats escape from their enclosure during cleaning, she never scolds them. Laurinda, on the other hand, is incredibly skilled at feeding. Working alongside her, we always manage to complete the busy afternoon feeding sessions both efficiently and accurately.

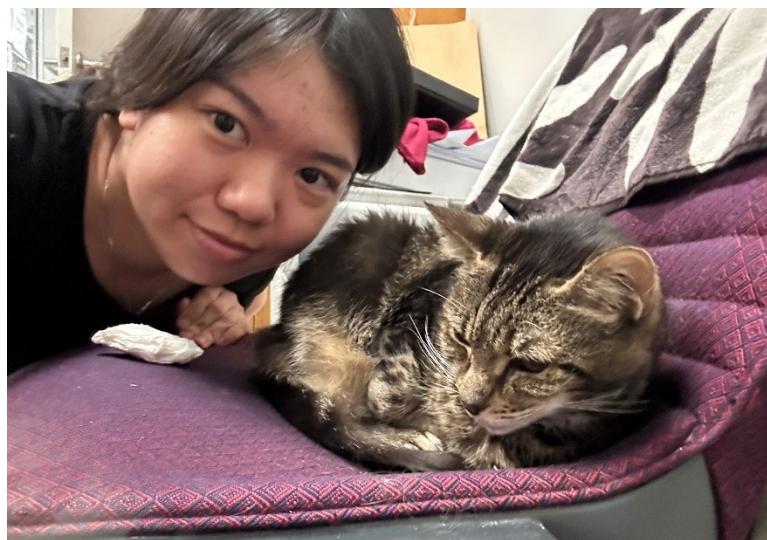
Prue is the most skillful of them all — the fairy godmother of cats, really. She has a magical touch and even makes beautiful little collars for the desexed kittens. I still remember how, every lunchtime, while Prue enjoyed her salad, Leclerc would stand right at the front of his enclosure, paws in his food bowl, staring at her and licking his lips. Prue, ever so perceptive, would catch the hint and offer him a few chicken cubes from her salad — which, of course, she'd prepared specially for the cats. She even makes an extra batch of homemade chicken as a treat for all of them.

There are many more Assistant Day Managers than the ones I mentioned, and each of them does a wonderful job. Besides them, we also have countless volunteers who keep the shelter running — cleaning, assisting with vet appointments, doing the washing, and handling the laundry.

I want to acknowledge every single person who helps out at the shelter, because behind every cat that finds a home, there's a whole team of people making it possible: those who clean every day to keep the space tidy, those who feed and monitor the cats' health, those who donate to cover the bills, and those who handle all the paperwork. They are all remarkable.



*Figure 1. Sharon(left), me(middle), Will (white cat), Tim (right)*



*Figure 2. Me and Lola in Tim's Chair*



*Figure 3. Picture with Wednesday Cleaning Shift; First Row: me (left), Charley (middle-left), Sue (middle-right), Prue (right), Sue's fluffy pink notebook (table).*

## **Summary**

I will miss here forever.