

# Saving the lives of animals is life enhancing



Volunteering has many positive benefits, for the people volunteering, for those they assist, and for the broader community. These include improved physical health, enhanced social skills and involvement, and improved mental health and happiness. Volunteers also help to reinforce the importance of a compassionate, collective and community minded society.<sup>56</sup>

Volunteers with SAFE (Saving Animals From Euthanasia), have the opportunity to contribute to an important community need and be involved in helping and saving the lives of animals.

Sue Hedley founded SAFE in 2003 after travelling for her job through the Pilbara, a sparsely populated, remote area in the Northwest of Western Australia that stretches over 510,000 square kilometres.

On her travels, Sue regularly came across homeless cats and dogs who were being euthanased due to the lack of animal rescue services in the region.

The not-for-profit animal welfare organisation successfully operates through a network of devoted volunteers operating from the mining and resources town of Karratha, committed to the welfare of thousands of animals.

SAFE is dedicated to the rescue, care and re-homing of abandoned and unwanted pets. Its primary goal is to make a difference in the quality of life for cats and dogs and to promote the immense value to humans of pet ownership. Less directly, but just as important, is its impact on volunteers.

*“SAFE has played a big part in my mental health.  
I have something so important to get up  
for every morning that it soon overrides any  
difficulties I may have on a personal level.”  
Sue Hedley, Founder, SAFE*

In addition to the positive benefits that can accrue from volunteering, SAFE also provides enjoyment and social contact through interaction with animals for people who, for whatever reason, are unable to have a pet of their own.

Through continued dedication and hard work, SAFE has branched into other regions including Broome, Perth, Carnarvon and the South West with networks throughout the state involved in pet rescuing and rehoming.



## Benefits of volunteers in regional settings

- Provides a safe haven for animals at risk in isolated rural Australia
- Volunteering brings about positive mental and physical benefits to the people involved
- Creates opportunities for people in isolated areas to connect

## Tips

- Consider setting up a SAFE style program independently or look for opportunity to plug into an existing animal welfare program
- Refer interested volunteers to SAFE style programs and publicise through council media tools
- When identifying pets in need, refer to SAFE style programs

## Web Links

SAFE organisation- [www.safe.asn.au](http://www.safe.asn.au)