

Keeping animals SAFE

By Shelley Hayes

Sue Hedley's passion for animal welfare led to the creation of SAFE—Saving Animals from Euthanasia. The organisation, now State-wide, is a rescue service which finds homes for unwanted animals. Shelley Hayes tells Sue's story.

I first met Sue at an International Women's Day gathering. I was struck by her quiet optimism and her passion for saving animals. She spoke of the organisation that she created to reduce the number of animals being euthanased unnecessarily.

Sue arrived in Karratha while travelling around Australia. Her background was in human services, which led to employment as an interviewer with the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Sue travelled extensively throughout the north-west of WA while in this position. On her travels she discovered many animals in need of homes but no services available to place them.



Hedley pictured with some of her SAFE dogs.

Sue's concerns eventually led to a meeting with other interested community members. As a result, an animal rescue service was established. This was no easy feat, with limited income and resources and a very remote and hostile environment. Although many people doubted and questioned her vision, Sue had a positive attitude and conviction that a solution would be found.

SAFE became an incorporated organisation in 2003 and aims to ensure that no animal anywhere is euthanased for lack of somewhere to stay. Sue discovered skills in marketing that previously she was unaware of. With this ability and her passion, she inspired many volunteers to support her cause in a wide variety of ways. Some have been able to offer permanent homes and foster care, while others have provided a wide range of administrative assistance. From its humble beginnings SAFE has become a thriving organisation. SAFE has branches in Carnarvon, Broome, Port Hedland, Bunbury and Perth—as well as networks throughout the State.

Sue runs SAFE from her modest home in Karratha with the support of her network of volunteers and little financial assistance. At times this can be challenging, because it is a seven day a week job with 24-hour on call demands and more volunteers are always needed.

Sue continues this challenging cause with her staunch belief in the far reaching benefits of providing people with pets and saving animals.

For further information on SAFE

safektha@bigpond.net.au or www.safe.asn.au

