

Oscar goes global for shelter dogs needing love

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ONCE homeless, Oscar is a dog in a million heading a global awareness campaign, the World Woof Tour, with owner Joanne Lefson to change perceptions of shelter dogs.

Dumped at the Cape of Good Hope SPCA shelter in 2004, Oscar was adopted by Lefson. He is one of the lucky ones as millions of dogs face a bleak future of not getting a second chance of finding a loving home.

There are more than 475 million dogs without homes. Oscar is the first canine to go global for his species. He's going around the world to share his story and change perceptions of shelter dogs.

The self-funded world tour has seen Oscar and Lefson tour 19 countries so far. Oscar was recently in Zambia, where he took a flight on a microlite over Victoria Falls, had a quick swim in the Zambezi and made a stop at the Ndola Animal Welfare Sanctuary. "He handled the flight better than me," joked Lefson.

She added that she could buy another house, but a dog's life couldn't be replaced.

A documentary of Oscar's travels is being filmed and there are books to write a book.

The globe-trotting dog is now in Ladakh, Northern India, taking a few weeks off at a donkey sanctuary set up by Lefson.

"Shelter dogs aren't old, flea-ridden pavement un-specials - they're amazing, wonderful, unique dogs, just like Oscar, that are just dying for that second chance," Lefson said.

This mighty mutt also brings some joy to dogs around the world. He adopts an "Oscar's Oscar" at shelters in countries he's visited. This dog gets a collar and lead, an Oscar chewy toy and a special-edition World Woof Tour tag for a person who gives it a home.

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MIGHTY MUTT: Oscar, a rescue dog from Cape Town, visited the leaning tower of Pisa in Italy. The formerly abandoned canine is on a world tour to give shelter dogs a new lease on life and a new home.

Picture: JOANNE LEFSON