

Country profile

AUSTRALIA



Habitat for Humanity in Australia

Habitat for Humanity's Australian programs are delivered through State Partners in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia. Habitat works with low-income families to achieve the dream of building and owning their own decent, affordable home. In Australia, Habitat also assists disadvantaged families through its repair and maintenance program, Brush with Kindness. Internationally, HFH Australia works in partnership with communities across the Asia-Pacific region to address housing poverty and to support integrated community development. HFH Australia and its partners are currently working in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

The housing need in Australia

In Australia, it is estimated there is a shortage of more than 500,000 affordable houses. About 60 percent of low-income families experience 'housing stress', that is, they spend more than 40 percent of their household disposable income on rent. Despite being a rich country, Australia has a housing affordability crisis and it is hitting poorest families the hardest. The cost of land, materials and construction has continued to rise, especially in the capital cities and major regional centers. National statistical data show that on any given night, over 100,000 people in Australia are homeless. Lack of affordable housing is a key contributor to this figure.

How Habitat addresses the need in Australia

To date, Habitat for Humanity has built over 220 homes with low-income families in Australia. Habitat's work is made possible through the donation of money, construction materials and land, and the contribution of volunteer labor. Volunteers from the community work alongside families who contribute their "sweat equity", or their own labor, in the construction of their homes. In Australia, Habitat also renovates existing homes and does repair and maintenance under Brush with Kindness. The program assists financially disadvantaged, elderly, frail and/or disabled people and more recently is working with resettlement of humanitarian refugees and asylum seekers. Brush with Kindness also serves as a vehicle for engaging corporate volunteers, in locations close to metropolitan areas.

COUNTRY FACTS

Capital	Canberra
Population	24 million (January 2016 est.)
Urbanization	nearly 90 percent lives in cities (2015)
Life expectancy	82.15 years (2015 est.)
Unemployment rate	5.7 percent (April 2016)
Access to improved water sources	100 percent
Access to improved sanitation facilities	100 percent

Source: World Factbook, Australian Bureau of Statistics

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in Australia

1998

Families served*

More than 128,000

Volunteers sent**

Over 4,000

*Families served internationally and in Australia since 2003

**Since 2001

Housing solutions

- New home constructions
- Disaster response
- Brush with Kindness
- Developing holistic communities



New home constructions

Habitat for Humanity Australia enables low-income families to achieve their dream of home ownership by building decent and affordable homes. Families partner with Habitat in the construction of their home. HFH Australia currently constructs about 10 homes a year.

Disaster response

In Australia, Habitat for Humanity coordinates Brush with Kindness programs to help those affected by natural disasters, including in the aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria, the Blue Mountains bushfires in New South Wales and the Queensland floods and most recently the bushfire-affected communities of Sampson Flat and Pinery in South Australia. In Victoria, Habitat's development of the Yea Heights Estate has focused on building homes for families affected by the 2009 bushfires.

Brush with Kindness

Under the Brush with Kindness program, HFH Australia mobilizes local volunteers to help people who are affected by bushfires, storms or floods, or those who are disadvantaged, disabled or elderly and are unable to maintain their own safe home. More recently, the program also involves the resettlement of humanitarian refugees and asylum seekers. Activities range from small home modifications, painting, repairing fences and debris removal and general landscaping.

Developing holistic communities

HFH Australia's international program is designed to achieve shelter and economic security, community health and education among other objectives. Together with its partners, HFH Australia supports projects in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

Meet a Habitat family



Tamara-Rae and John with their children in front of their new house on handover day.

Tamara-Rae and John from New South Wales turned to Habitat for Humanity Australia after losing their home and all their savings when an interstate job offer failed to come through as planned. With seven children to support, Tamara-Rae and John were in need of a hand up.

Volunteers from a number of organizations came together over two weeks to help build Tamara-Rae and John's new family home. The days were spent in the heat lifting trusses, building walls, digging and painting. On the final day, a dedication ceremony was held and the family was finally handed the keys for their new home.

"We have had a tough life but we stay positive," said Tamara-Rae. "Having to move house was a constant fear, as the question was always, 'where to and what will the house be like? Habitat for Humanity threw us a lifeline and we grabbed it with both hands."

What you can do

DONATE, VOLUNTEER or **PARTNER** to help families break the poverty cycle through decent homes. To learn more about HFH Australia's work, please contact us.

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Corporate volunteers working on landscaping under the Brush with Kindness program.