

# 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 safe, secure home. In Australia, Habitat also assists disadvantaged families through its repair and maintenance program, Brush with Kindness. Internationally, Habitat Australia works in partnership with communities across the Asia-Pacific region to address housing poverty and to support integrated community development. Habitat 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.



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

## COUNTRY FACTS\*

<b>Capital</b>	Canberra
<b>Main country facts</b>	Gained independence in 1901
<b>Population</b>	Over 22.9 million
<b>Urbanization</b>	89.4 percent live in cities
<b>Life expectancy</b>	82.2 years
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	5.8 percent
<b>Population living below poverty line</b>	NA

\*Source: World Factbook

## HABITAT FACTS

**When Habitat started in Australia**  
1998

**Individuals served in FY16**  
980

**Volunteers engaged in FY16**  
2,325

**Housing solutions**  
New home constructions; disaster response; Brush with Kindness; Global Village volunteer teams



## New home constructions

Habitat for Humanity Australia enables low-income families to achieve their dream of home ownership by building safe, secure homes. Families partner with Habitat in the construction of their home. Habitat 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, the bushfire-affected communities of Sampson Flat and Pinery in South Australia. In Victoria, Habitat's development of the Yea Heights Estate focused on building homes for families affected by the 2009 bushfires.

## Brush with Kindness

Under the Brush with Kindness program, Habitat 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. The program also involved 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

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

## Meet a Habitat family

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.'"



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

## What you can do

You can help families around the world improve their living conditions by taking one or more of the following actions:

### DONATE

[habitat.org.au/donate](http://habitat.org.au/donate)

### VOLUNTEER

Join one of the scheduled Global Village trips to one of the Habitat projects around the world or lead your own. For more information, please contact [global.village@habitat.org.au](mailto:global.village@habitat.org.au)

To learn more about Habitat projects in Australia, please contact us.

### CONTACT

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