

New Zealand



Habitat for Humanity in New Zealand

Active in New Zealand since 1983, Habitat for Humanity has a national support center in Auckland, 11 affiliates and a network of 18 ReStores spread across the North and South Islands. Habitat New Zealand gives families a hand up to improve their housing situation and also supports projects across the Asia-Pacific region, especially in Samoa, Tonga and Fiji.

The housing need in New Zealand

New Zealand has been described as the most expensive country in the world to buy property when compared with household income, according to international ratings agency Fitch. In Auckland, where demand outweighs supply, housing cost has more than doubled in recent years. This has locked many families out of the prospect of owning homes for generations, and placed pressure on rental availability and cost. About one-third of New Zealand's total housing stock, about 1.3 million houses, consists of rental houses with the other 65 percent owner-occupied. The effects of cold and damp housing on children's health in New Zealand are well documented, particularly as families may have to share poorly insulated and badly maintained rental housing with their relatives or even live in uninsulated garages. In rural areas, Habitat has come across low-income families who live in shelter without electricity, running water or proper bathrooms as well as houses that are at the end of their structural life span.

How Habitat addresses the need in New Zealand

Habitat New Zealand works with volunteers, corporations, nongovernmental organizational partners and donors, and through funds raised via ReStores to enable families to build decent, affordable homes. Through its 11 affiliates, Habitat also provides assistance through the critical home repair program "A Brush With Kindness", unique activities such as social rentals, reconstruction following the 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, group accommodation facilities and partnerships with government agencies.



(From left) Matt van Wijk and Graeme Perkin on a Global Village build in Samoa.
Photo: Habitat for Humanity/Ben Ross.

COUNTRY FACTS

Capital	Wellington
Main country facts	Women gained the right to vote in 1893
Population	Over 5 million
Urbanization	86 percent live in cities
Life expectancy	82 years
Unemployment rate	4.2 percent

Source: Statistics New Zealand

HABITAT FACTS

When Habitat started in New Zealand
1993

Individuals served in FY18
3,895

Volunteers engaged in FY18
4,107

Housing solutions
Assisted home ownership;
disaster response; Global Village
volunteer program



Assisted home ownership

Habitat works with families in need of decent housing to carry out critical home repairs through the "A Brush With Kindness" program that provides further opportunities for volunteers to be part of Habitat's work. The ReStores accept donated goods and resell them to the general public at a fraction of the retail price to help the Habitat communities.

Global Village volunteer program

New Zealanders have the chance to participate in small and large volunteer builds around the world, helping families achieve a decent place to live. In 2018, volunteer destinations include Nepal, Samoa, Fiji, Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Myanmar and Argentina.

Focus areas in the Pacific Islands

Following the devastating February 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, Habitat New Zealand worked with the government to house 21 affected families. Habitat New Zealand also lends a hand to its Pacific Islands neighbors such as Samoa and Tonga. Both were affected by Cyclone Gita in February 2018. This saw Habitat ramp up its project in Samoa, supporting 286 families into secure homes. Currently, Habitat is embarking on a five-year project in Samoa in conjunction with the New Zealand government and a local partner. Habitat has also partnered with the New Zealand government and a local partner in Tonga to repair 340 homes and train families on building and maintenance techniques. Habitat is aiming to support up to 200 more families with major repairs and full house reconstructions in Tonga. This work in Tonga builds upon Habitat New Zealand's memorandum of understanding with the government of Tonga, signed in 2016. Habitat has also partnered with Habitat Fiji and the New Zealand government to engage in an extensive multi-year project to build disaster resilience in 40 communities, reducing potential damage and loss of life during the tropical cyclone season.

Meet a Habitat family

Jesse, 27, and Sherradon, 28, were used to being asked to move by their landlords. The most recent was when they had 90 days to leave their cold, insulated rental house because it was put on sale. Their four children were frequently sick throughout winter. In summer, their old house lacked space as one of the three bedrooms would become too hot to be used. Hence, it was with much excitement that the family of six welcomed family, friends and supporters to their newly completed Habitat home in Ngaruawahia on May 10, 2019. While looking forward to spending time outdoors, Jesse says: "I'm excited mostly just to be settled in a home that's warm, dry, and we don't have to worry about getting kicked out...with space to actually fit the kids in without having to stress out about them getting sick every single winter." Sherradon has plans to study and become a physiotherapist when her children are a little older while Jesse, who is currently studying sport and exercise science, is eyeing a Master's degree.



Jesse and Sherradon can plan for the future now that they and their children have a permanent home.

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

In New Zealand: habitat.org.nz/shop/donate.html

In the U.S.*: habitat.org/donate/

** You can designate your donation to Habitat New Zealand or a specific cause by clicking the designation option.*

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, contact globalvillage@habitat.org.nz

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

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