



Volunteers on the Brush With Kindness project in Queensland, January 2011

## HABITAT FACTS

Families served this year<sup>1</sup>

**15**

Families served to date<sup>2</sup>

**138**

<sup>1</sup>New houses, rehabilitations and repairs in the year to June 30, 2011

<sup>2</sup>New houses, rehabilitations, repairs and other assistance

### Key Activities

- New house constructions and disaster response in Australia.
- Funding projects around the Asia-Pacific region that incorporate better health, education, better access to water and sanitation, and improving livelihoods.
- Recruiting local and overseas volunteer build teams.

### Habitat for Humanity in Australia

Habitat for Humanity started work in Australia in 1998. Habitat builds homes with low-income families in the states of Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. HFH Australia also favors international projects that deliver complete housing solutions and which incorporate poverty-alleviation measures. Key components incorporate improving health and hygiene, education, access to water and sanitation facilities as well as training people to earn a living. In early 2010, HFH Australia achieved AusAID accreditation which will provide access to official government funding over the coming years.

### Housing needs in Australia

One in ten Australian households are in housing stress, paying more than 30 percent of their income in housing costs, according to a local lobby group. In the past decade, Australian house prices have risen by 147 percent while incomes have gone up by only 57 percent, said Australians for Affordable Housing. In the last five years, rents have increased at twice the rate of inflation. On any given night over 105,000 people in Australia are homeless, said the group, a coalition of national housing, welfare and community sector organizations. The supply of affordable housing can be affected by planning, regulatory and financial barriers, said a national research organization. The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute has identified the not-for-profit sector as an institutional vehicle for increasing and managing affordable housing.

### How Habitat for Humanity works

Habitat for Humanity partners with Australian families who need simple, decent and affordable homes. Using the traditional cost-effective and sustainable Habitat model, homes are constructed using as much volunteer labor and donated materials as possible. Donations of land, financial resources and labor are sought from governments, businesses, churches,

non-government organizations, public bodies, multilateral organizations and individuals. Partner families must invest 500 hours of “sweat equity”, or their own labor, in the construction. Their mortgage loan repayments help to build more homes for more families. To date, Habitat has helped about 100 families achieve the Australian dream of home ownership.

### Local building program

HFH Australia runs its domestic program through state affiliates spread across the country. Each affiliate has one or more chapters which deliver the program at a local level. The average Habitat home in Australia is 100 sq. m. in size and is typically a timber frame structure fitted with wall cladding and concrete or timber floors. It takes approximately six to nine months to complete a house. In New South Wales, the Habitat affiliate is involved in a significant initiative with the state government to build affordable homes with low-income families in the suburb of Bidwill. In Queensland, Habitat is rebuilding homes after a series of floods badly affected the state in December 2010 and January 2011. This is HFH Australia’s second disaster response following the February 2009 bushfires in Victoria. In both states, Habitat helps affected families under its “Brush with Kindness” program which mobilizes teams of volunteers to undertake minor works such as making repairs, painting and landscaping. Habitat will undertake its largest project in Victoria to date by building up to 25 houses for affected families to resettle close to their former homes.

### Supporting Habitat’s work overseas

HFH Australia is currently supporting projects in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam. In the Asia-Pacific region, HFH Australia and its partners have improved the living conditions of 825 households; helped 839 families gain access to water and sanitation facilities; trained 2,643 community members in health awareness; and enabled

# COUNTRY FACTS

## New South Wales Affiliate chapters:

- Australian Capital Territory and South East NSW
- Cowra
- Northern Rivers
- Orange
- Riverina
- Tamworth
- Western Sydney

## Victoria Affiliate chapters:

- Mornington Peninsula;
- Shepparton;
- West Gippsland (Warragul and Drouin)



**POPULATION:** 21,766, 711 (July 2011 est)

**CAPITAL:** Canberra

**AREA:** 7,741,220 sq. km.

**ETHNIC GROUPS:** Caucasian 92%, Asian 7%, aboriginal and others 1%

**LANGUAGES:** English 78.5%, Chinese 2.5%, Italian 1.6%, Greek 1.3%, Arabic 1.2%, Vietnamese 1%, other 8.2%, unspecified 5.7% (2006 census)

**RELIGIONS:** Catholic 25.8%, Anglican 18.7%, Uniting Church 5.7%, Presbyterian and Reformed 3%, Eastern Orthodox 2.7%, other Christian 7.9%, Buddhist 2.1%, Muslim 1.7%, other 2.4%, unspecified 11.3%, none 18.7% (2006 census)

**LITERACY:** 99% (2003 est.)

**URBANIZATION:** 89% (2010)

**ACCESS TO IMPROVED WATER SOURCES:** 100% (2008)

**ACCESS TO IMPROVED SANITATION FACILITIES:** 100% (2008)

Source: CIA World Factbook

96 children to go to school for the first time in their lives. In addition, disaster-response activities have delivered 170,000 households with emergency food, water and shelter kits. In late May 2011, Habitat launched its "1,000 Homes for Hope" campaign at its first-ever fundraising gala dinner in Sydney. The campaign aims to transform the lives of 1,000 families in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, HFH Australia will support community-based initiatives such as water and sanitation facilities, and livelihood and educational opportunities.

## International volunteers

Through its active Global Village program, HFH Australia sends over 400 volunteers each year to Habitat build sites in Cambodia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, India, Malaysia, Afghanistan and Vietnam to construct homes alongside Habitat home partners. In December 2011, about 70 Australian volunteers will travel to Long An province, Vietnam, for the Nine Dragons Build. The special event will be the second one organized in 2011. The Hand In Hand Build in March saw 100 women volunteers contribute financial resources, time and labor to help female-headed households build homes in Nepal.

## Partners

HFH Australia receives funding and volunteer support from locally-based corporations, including foundation sponsor QBE LMI, an Australian mortgage insurance company; Arup, a British professional services firm; Santos, an Australian oil and gas exploration and production company; Solar Shop, an Australian solar energy provider; Origin Energy and Cement Australia. The Charitable Foundation and Communities for Communities also contribute considerable funding and development expertise.



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## Habitat Highlights

- **December 2011:** HFH Australia's Nine Dragons Build saw about 70 Australian volunteers build homes in Vietnam's Long An province.
- **October 2011:** To mark World Habitat Day, HFH Australia hosted a high tea for major donors and corporate partners in Sydney and encouraged the guests to hold their own High Tea for Habitat during the month of October.
- **September 2011:** HFH Australia held a media launch during which it unveiled home partner research which showed the impact of a Habitat home in terms of sense of security, stability, health, education and employment. Visit <http://www.habitat.org.au/document.doc?id=554>
- **June/July 2011:** A volunteer on the Hand In Hand Build in Nepal organized photo exhibitions in aid of Habitat in Sydney and Melbourne. Another exhibition was later held in Singapore. The volunteer, Louise Cutler, won an honorable mention in 2011 Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors' Nehemiah Awards for outstanding volunteerism.
- **May 2011:** HFH Australia raised about A\$65,000 (US\$69,500) in support of its "1,000 Homes for Hope" campaign which was launched during an inaugural gala dinner in Sydney.
- **March 2011:** About 100 women supporters of HFH Australia traveled to Nepal to build homes with female-headed households. The Hand In Hand Build also marked the centenary of International Women's Day.

## Meet a Habitat family helped by HFH Australia

MOTORCYCLE taxi driver Sent Pou and his wife Pok Ya used to live in an informal settlement located on prime land in Cambodia's capital city Phnom Penh. They had to move after a fire broke out in their community. The government provided the Sent family with a 24 sq. m. plot of land, but it was 20 km. away in the peri-urban community of Andong.

Life was difficult when the family relocated. They built a wooden shelter with a bare floor; it leaked during the rainy season. There was no toilet; the family had to defecate in the open in the village.

Pou and Ya have five children, all under the age of 15. Ya was worried about her family's health and future as the children were often sick with dengue fever or diarrhea and other ailments.

Ya heard about Habitat for Humanity at an orientation meeting in her community and signed up. She started saving for a new home. In February 2010, they became Habitat home partners with their own home. The two-story structure is small, with a footprint of just 20 sq m. But it is solid—made of fired bricks—and safe—with a zinc sheeting roof. There is a concrete floor and a proper toilet. The couple and their children sleep comfortably on the upper floor which is spacious enough to accommodate the growing family; a new baby is on the way. The US\$5 a day Pou earns riding his taxi is sufficient for the family to afford monthly mortgage repayment of US\$19 toward the cost of their house.

The Sent family are proud to be home owners. Life has improved. The health of the entire family has improved. The children are doing better in their studies because they now have space to do their homework.

"I never imagined that I would have a home like this," says Ya. Now she is participating in classes to learn more about health and hygiene and how to better manage the family budget.



**The Sent family was among 81 families in Andong supported by The Charitable Foundation through HFH Australia.**



## What volunteers say

"I had no idea I was so tough, resilient, resourceful and also how much I would enjoy working alongside a team of strong, successful women. I feel like I could conquer the world – or at least build another house!"

*- Vivienne Storey, who volunteered on Hand In Hand Build in Nepal, March 2011*