



## AT A GLANCE

Families served to date<sup>1</sup>

# 357

Families served this year<sup>2</sup>

# 25

<sup>1</sup>New houses and rehabilitations

<sup>2</sup>New houses, rehabilitations, repairs and assistance in the year to June 30, 2010

— Updated January 2011 —

**I**N MANY WAYS New Zealand is blessed. With its majestic mountains, forests, lakes, beaches and pastures, New Zealand proudly promotes its “clean, green” image. A relatively young country, New Zealand has a small population and a liberal, tolerant and seemingly egalitarian society.

However, not everyone has the same opportunities. Many low-income and even middle-income families want to build or buy their own homes — the ‘Kiwi dream’. But questions of housing affordability, high household debt and an inability to save for a deposit close the door to ownership for many families.

A 2009 study by Demographia International, a consultancy, found that New Zealand has some of the most severely unaffordable housing markets in the developed world. Since 1991, housing affordability has declined substantially in New Zealand. The government’s “2025” taskforce identified planning constraints on land as the largest obstacle to housing affordability. In particular, the taskforce found that council zoning restrictions and arbitrary urban limits prevent the release of sufficient land to lower the overall price of housing.

Median house prices have risen from 3.5 times the median household income in 1991 through to 5.7 times the median income. This is almost double the average ratio in the United States.

In a 2008 study, Demographia estimated that 29 percent of households that rent in New Zealand suffered from “housing-related stress”. Twenty-eight percent of them — many of them low-income families — spent more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing.

New Zealand is also troubled by a significant proportion of families living in crowded, damp and cold houses, which results in negative health and social outcomes.

Although the government provides a limited amount of rental housing for low-income families, the waiting list is long: As at late 2008, the waiting list comprised nearly 10,000 people. For financial reasons, families may choose to live in garages or other sub-

standard accommodation, or to squeeze into properties designed to accommodate only a few people.

Habitat for Humanity New Zealand built its first home in 1993 in Pukekohe, a small rural town just south of Auckland in the North Island. It has grown into one of the most innovative national programs in the Asia-Pacific region.

HFH New Zealand works through a network of 11 affiliates spread throughout the country and a national support center based in Auckland which coordinates finance, marketing, fundraising, Global Village volunteer and disaster response programs.

A typical Habitat house in New Zealand is usually a stand-alone structure comprising three-to-five bedrooms, 95–125 sq. m. in floor area. Houses are constructed with the most suitable and affordable building materials: timber framing, plasterboard internal lining, suspended floor on treated timber foundation piles, fibrous cement cladding and iron roofs.

The average time taken to build a house is three to six months. Some affiliates undertake five-day special “Blitz Builds” to attract public attention and secure large scale or strategic volunteer engagement.

In 2009, local affiliates also commenced on a “A Brush With Kindness” program, aiming to help homeowners unable to keep up their repairs and maintenance. Maintenance work valued less than NZ\$20,000 (US\$14,800) is aimed to help in particular the elderly, people with disabilities and single parents. Funds are repaid by the families on an affordable basis. HFH New Zealand sees this program growing rapidly as a means of engaging many more volunteers, different types of donors, and involving the community fully. To date, A Brush With Kindness has helped 20 families.

HFH New Zealand has become active in responding to natural disasters in neighboring Pacific Island states. After a tsunami hit Samoa in September 2009, HFH New Zealand established a Habitat Resource Center to prefabricate materials, engaged multiple funding partners, and sent over 600 volunteers over an eight-month period to build 89 new homes. Volunteers slept on a church

# COUNTRY FACTS

POPULATION: 4,252,277 (July 2010 est.)

CAPITAL: Wellington

LAND AREA: 268,680 sq. km.

ETHNIC GROUPS: European 56.8%, Asian 8%, Maori 7.4%, Pacific Islander 4.6%, mixed 9.7%, others 13.5% (2006 census)

LANGUAGES: English 91.2%, Maori 3.9%, Samoan 2.1%, French 1.3%, Hindi 1.1%, Cantonese 1.1%, Mandarin 1%, others 12.9%

RELIGIONS: Anglican 13.8%, Roman Catholic 12.6%, Presbyterian, Congregational and Reformed 10%, Christian (no denomination specified) 4.6%, Methodist 3%, Pentecostal 2%, Baptist 1.4%, other Christians 3.8%, Maori Christians 1.6%, Hindu 1.6%, Buddhist 1.3%, other religions 2.2%, none 32.2%, others or unidentified 9.9% (2006 census)

LITERACY: 99% (2003 census)

URBANIZATION: 87% (2008)

Sources: CIA World Factbook, New Zealand 2006 census

floor hall, were fed by the local village community, and worked in Samoa for two weeks at a time. As a result of its work in Samoa, HFH New Zealand has entered into many new partnerships, including Air New Zealand, World Vision New Zealand, Digicel Samoa, Caritas Samoa and others.

In a related disaster response program, volunteer teams from New Zealand are helping HFH Fiji to build new homes in a remote part of Vanua Levu following damaged caused by Cyclone Tomas earlier in 2010.

HFH New Zealand is ramping up the number of volunteers it sends overseas each year. A total of 400 volunteers were sent in 2010. Teams have gone recently to Fiji, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, China, Mongolia, Nepal and Vietnam as well as Ethiopia. There are plans to send at least 39 teams overseas in 2011 including two teams each of 150 volunteers to Cambodia.

New Zealand is also a popular destination for international volunteer teams. HFH New Zealand hosts about 10 teams each year, mainly from the USA. 🏠



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## HFH NEW ZEALAND Highlights

- In October 2010, HFH New Zealand mobilized 150 volunteers for the week-long Everest Build in Nepal.
- In September 2009, HFH New Zealand began working with the Samoan government to rebuild homes following a tsunami which killed 189 people and left hundreds of families homeless. HFH New Zealand established a Habitat Resource Center and sent more than 600 volunteers who built 89 *fales*, or traditional homes, in eight months.
- In mid-2010, HFH New Zealand was bestowed with the title of *Agaiotupu-olemalaeotot'amalemalaeolea'ava*, or "chief master-carpenter" by the Samoan community, and the award was presented by the Samoan Prime Minister to HFH New Zealand chairman Grant Cathro.
- HFH New Zealand was successful in obtaining NZ\$1.38 million in interest-free loan funds for five affiliates from the New Zealand government's Housing Innovation Fund.
- The Greater Auckland affiliate is partnering with the New Zealand Housing Foundation to build 16 homes of which 11 will be built by Habitat and the remaining by the foundation. Five homes have been completed with many corporations sending teams to help with the builds.
- In November 2009, 142 volunteers from New Zealand joined the Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project, which took place in five countries in the Mekong River region.

In September 2009, as part of New Zealand Fashion Week, 300 women volunteers from the fashion industry and corporations took part in a five day "blitz" build. Led by local fashion designer Trelise Cooper, the volunteers built a house on Auckland's waterfront which was later transported to a Habitat home partner.