

## Welfare and Development Policy

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Welfare and Development Policy</b>
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<b>Department</b>	<b>International Program, Habitat for Humanity Australia</b>
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### Introduction

Habitat for Humanity Australia (HFHA) clearly distinguishes its community development and humanitarian response work from welfare support that provides only immediate and un-sustained benefits. HFHA seeks to foster strength, stability and self-reliance by engaging communities as active partners in project planning and activities in order to achieve sustainable outcomes resulting from its interventions. HFHA provides humanitarian assistance to individuals and families, however it is integrated within a broader community development approach aimed at improving social and economic conditions, improving disaster planning and response, and strengthening the capacity of communities to respond to their own needs.

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the HFHA Capacity Development & Strengthening Policy which addresses complementary requirements for implementing partners.

### Purpose

This policy is to ensure that HFHA programs contribute to sustainable development practices and do not contribute to dependency issues in the communities we work. The policy acts to ensure development assistance is provided in a socially inclusive way and has clear objectives and appropriate project timeframes. The Policy is designed to document HFHA's philosophy of encouraging and supporting community members to be drivers of their own development, strengthening their capacity for their future, to live a life without the need for ongoing assistance.

## Policy Statement

HFHA adopts a strengths-based model to enable communities to respond to their own needs, by ensuring that initiatives are undertaken that:

- Promote self-reliance, by strengthening existing skills and building additional capabilities that communities need to respond to their own development needs.
- Build upon the local resources and capacities that exist within the communities that HFHA works with.
- Are socially inclusive and engage families and communities as active partners in every stage of the development process.
- Reinforce the approach of a ‘hand up’ and not a ‘hand out’ to ensure that the dignity and equality of communities with which we work remain intact.
- Focus on project activities that are time bound and include exit strategies, as well as strategies for ensuring the long-term sustainability of project outcomes.

## Policy in Practice

In implementing this policy, HFHA:

- Implements projects in cooperation with government authorities, local partner organisations and other relevant stakeholders and duty-bearers with target communities to ensure accountability, sustainability and leverage local knowledge and systems.
- Provides capacity building training for local communities that include leadership, collaborative planning and governance learning, as well as livelihood skills development.
- Works to support vulnerable communities with the principle of a “hand up” and not a “hand out”. Physical project interventions are always incorporated within a broader program of community planning, capacity building and skills development activities with community members, in which beneficiaries are obliged to participate. Assistance through housing security will also sometimes be provided on a shared-cost basis with home partners entering into an accessible and manageable loan arrangement as part of their contribution. Exceptions may include projects assisting disaster-affected or extremely vulnerable groups who have no means of making loan repayments. However projects also typically include livelihood support components to enable income generation initiatives that will support ongoing housing development and maintenance by beneficiaries. Home partners may also be required to make non-financial contributions to the project like voluntary labour, building materials and other means of support.
- Facilitates community saving schemes as a means for participants to contribute financially to building their own homes and manage loan repayments (where applicable).
- Creates self-sustaining revolving funds which can be used to assist other disenfranchised families.
- Ensures that program staff and local counterparts understand and support the principles of sustainable community development and seek advice and expertise where required.



We build **strength, stability, and self-reliance** *through shelter.*

- Ensures that project designs go beyond the provision of individual houses and community infrastructure to support broader social and economic development in target communities.
- Monitors social and economic development outcomes as measures of project impact.

