

## Habitat Women

### Habitat Women: building a more equal future

Australia's construction and trade industries have been male dominated, with women making up just 24% of the workforce. Your support is transforming that imbalance through our Habitat Women program – empowering women with the skills, confidence and support to enter the sector.

We had the opportunity to learn all about the experiences of two recent participants.

Elizabeth was drawn to Habitat Women because of her love for making things and using tools. Before joining the program, Elizabeth had a diverse career with previous work teaching piano and in communications and marketing. Her experience with Habitat Women has been overwhelmingly positive; she describes the program as empowering, inspiring and fun.

*“Honestly, I think my favourite thing is the people and just being able to come in and be myself and everyone is so encouraging and supportive and that has been really, really nice.”*

“It's really good for all skill levels, I think most people could come in and find something they're really good at”. Elizabeth feels this fosters a sense of achievement and confidence. She's optimistic about pursuing a career that matches her newfound passion.

Keils spoke with us about barriers in the construction industry and the power of learning in an encouraging and safe environment.

Before joining Habitat Women, Kiels had worked in hospitality for over a decade. She'd always been interested in the trade industry but felt that the environment was not conducive to her joining at the time. Joining Habitat Women provided her with a long-awaited opportunity to pursue her passion in a supportive setting.

For Kiels the program is a gateway into a field she previously thought inaccessible. She found the learning environment to be safe and inclusive, and filled with people who shared her enthusiasm for learning and growth. Kiels was able to engage with tools and techniques in a way she had always dreamed of, growing her confidence and building her skills.



*Elizabeth hones her tile cutting skills.*

Keils is now considering career opportunities she once believed were out of reach.

*“I applied online and I got to speak to some wonderful people who encouraged me to join the course and I've just had the absolute best time learning with these beautiful women and getting into a field that I thought I didn't have access to anymore.”*

Keils' message is clear - the experience is not only educational but also empowering, opening doors to a rewarding career.

If you or someone you know might be interested in exploring a career in construction, visit: [habitatwomen.org.au](https://habitatwomen.org.au)



*Kiels has new confidence*



"I have never lived in a brick house before" - Mrs Thuan (centre)

## Brick by brick: A new beginning for Mrs. Thuan's family

Life has not been kind to Mrs Thuan and her family. She lives with her two children in a degraded house in Dong Thap, Vietnam. Her husband suffered a stroke and passed away 5 years ago. Her daughter, Trang, is intellectually disabled due to polio fever and the effects of Agent Orange inherited from her father, who served in the army during the war.

Earlier this year, a team of Habitat volunteers joined forces to work alongside Mrs Thuan to build a new safe home, and hope for the family's future.

While Mrs Thuan was softly spoken, she set a great example for the team and encouraged the team through her

actions during the week-long visit to build a sturdy, brick home. She ensured there was equipment nearby to use, she helped move sand and keep the worksite tidy. Most appreciated



was the fresh local fruits she prepared for the team during breaks from the hard work and 40-degree heat.

"The team has done a good job. We've received many comments from our neighbours who have come to see the new house. We are all

working under extreme heat, but they are giving me compliments. It's a huge pleasure to have the team here."

Mrs Thuan's daughter Trang cannot speak; however she could gesture with her hands, and her smile was there to greet the team each morning and wish them well at the end of the day with a big wave.

Until this point most of the family's income has been used to support Trang's medical expenses. Trang's younger brother, Mr Em, works as a mason or a labourer in nearby rice fields to support the family to bring in 180 USD each month.

Mother Thuan assists in earning extra income by working as a lotus seed peeler at home, while taking care of Trang and completing the housework. Their income is barely enough to cover daily needs.

To survive the harsh environment, living conditions, disability and death in the family they all must work incredibly hard and as a team. For a short time, Habitat volunteers were privileged to be a part of that team!

The new family home has a sturdy foundation, concrete pillars, brick walls with a cement floor and a tiled roof.

At 63 years old, Mrs Thuan is thrilled to finally have a strong, safe home, designed with Trang's needs in mind. "I have never lived in a brick house before. I am very excited and can hardly sleep at night," she shared.

We are deeply inspired by our Global Village volunteers - people of all ages and walks of life who pursue the goal of making the world a better place. We have no doubt Mrs Thuan, her beautiful family, and the volunteers, will be forever changed by their experience.

If you would like to join a Global Village team and change lives overseas, visit:

[www.helpinghands.online/global-village](http://www.helpinghands.online/global-village)





Many families in Nepal live in homes that are constantly on the verge of collapse.

## Unlocking Potential – Financial Training in Nepal

A quarter of Nepal's population lives below the international poverty line of around 2.15 USD a day.

People in Nepal's poorest communities earn incomes from low-paid or temporary work. Even those with a regular income often struggle to make home repairs, and building a durable and disaster-resilient home is beyond reach.

Magar and her husband Tek, live in the Udayapur district. Their house, made from wood and mud, was on the verge of collapsing. During monsoon rains, the structure shook and leaked water.

Every year, they relied on expensive loans from loan sharks, paying them back with their hard-earned income.

### Empowering Families with Safe Loans and Financial Literacy

Recognising the need for people like Magar and Tek to be able to gain access to safe loans to make home improvements, Habitat works with partner organisations to deliver financial literacy training

and help people acquire regulated small housing loans. This project has helped over 100,000 people access housing loans so far.

During the financial literacy training course, Magar and Tek learned about managing expenses, saving money, and earning additional income. Empowered by this knowledge and with support from Habitat

for Humanity, the couple secured a small loan from a regulated provider so they could buy materials, such as cement, wood, and zinc panels for a durable roof.

This approach is testament to our 'hand up, not a hand out' ethos, empowering people with the resources they need to lift themselves out of housing poverty.





## Building healing homes for NAIDOC Week

**In recognition of NAIDOC Week throughout July your support has contributed to improving housing in Sydney, Newcastle and Brisbane - helping to provide a place to live in peace, dignity and security for First Nations' families.**

Working with First Nations' partner organisations, Habitat corporate

volunteers gave a helping hand to maintain and repair accommodation and shelters for Indigenous women and children experiencing family violence.

We're proud to share some of the wonderful feedback we've received from our housing partners.

"Thanks to Habitat for Humanity Australia who have repainted and brought our crisis refuge back to life.

We have a new sense of pride bringing Aboriginal women and children fleeing DV into this space. Habitat also repainted a transitional property that we had sitting vacant for almost

2 months (amidst a national housing crisis!) due to the state of the property. It's true that a fresh coat of paint brings so much life, value and warmth to a property. It was a 2 day project, and we had a family housed in it the next day!"

"Client J was so very grateful for a new home after what felt like months of fighting a system that is supposed to be supporting her. It was the beginning of a healing home."

"We cannot wait to see the healing cycle start again for another precious family."



We'd love to hear from you!

# get involved



1800 88 55 99



[habitat.org.au/spring2024](https://habitat.org.au/spring2024)



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