



Welcome to the February edition of our [building hope](#) newsletter.

Recent events underscore the importance of our work. The bushfires that tore through northern Victoria have called us to action, and in this newsletter you'll hear about our immediate response to support affected communities. We are thankful to all the volunteers who have participated in our bushfire recovery initiative and those serving in our ReStores over the summer.

Our ReStores continue to make a significant contribution to resource our impact whilst supporting their surrounding communities. You can read a beautiful illustration of how our Rosebud team has enabled students from a local special school to have retail work experience.

We celebrate with partner families who have refinanced or paid out their long-term interest-free loan from Habitat. You can read Lisa's story below and what Habitat's affordable housing program has meant for her.

I'm pleased to share the appointment of Maurice as our new Board Chair, with Amelia Pickering becoming Board Vice Chair. We also warmly welcome Fiona Hilson to the Board and look forward to the wisdom and experience this board will bring.

Next month is International Women's Day, and our Brush with Kindness teams will be out painting and gardening in support of our housing partners and households who have experienced disadvantage. Our volunteers will be helping create creating warm, safe and welcoming places for women and their families, who have experienced adversity. This is a great opportunity for Victorian businesses to make a difference. Contact us at partnerships@habitat.org.au to book or find out more!

We'll be gathering for our annual Building Hope fundraising dinner on Saturday 18th April. This will be an outstanding time to hear stories of Habitat's impact in people's lives, and raise the funds we need to sustain and grow our vital work. Please mark the date in your diary!

I hope you enjoy this edition of our [building hope](#) newsletter.

Warm regards,



Justin Simpson
CEO



Resilience, Hard Work & her Habitat Home

For Lisa, one of our Partner Families, homeownership once felt out of reach. The idea of securing a loan or owning a home was something she never imagined possible. But through determination, hard work at the local bakery, and in partnership with Habitat, that dream became a reality.

Being given the opportunity to work towards a Habitat home was life-changing. "I worked really hard and eventually did it," she shares. Reaching that milestone of being able to re-finance this year is an achievement for Lisa filled with pride and excitement. "I was so excited to have actually accomplished this."

Habitat provided a 10-year interest free loan to Lisa, which has been a significant 'hand up', enabling her to experience the secure housing and develop financial capacity and independence.

"I owe everything to Habitat for giving me the opportunity to do this," she says. "It was the best thing in my life."

Lisa's message to the Habitat community, volunteers, donors and supporters, her message is simple and heartfelt: **thank you for helping make a place to call home possible.**



International Women's Day Brush with Kindness

UN Women Australia highlights a stark reality: one in three women worldwide will experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, yet the vast majority will never seek formal help or justice. First Nations women continue to face disproportionately high rates of family violence, underscoring the urgent need for safe, culturally responsive support and housing.

A safe home isn't just shelter, it's **the foundation for recovery, dignity, and a future free from fear.**

International Women's Day is more than awareness, it's **a chance to take action.** Throughout March, Brush with Kindness volunteers will be refreshing spaces for our housing partners who serve Victorian women and their families. Brush with Kindness teams will make these spaces warm, safe and inviting for women and families who have faced adversity.

We're partnering with The Salvation Army and Women's Housing Ltd, both supporting women and families at risk. We have spaces available for corporate teams who want to get involved and support International Women's Day through meaningful action.

[Book your corporate team here](#)



Bushfire Recovery in Highlands

Disaster recovery has been part of our DNA as Rob touched on with Habitat's involvement in the Black Saturday bushfire recovery and Maurice's connection to Habitat through the Mallacoota fires. The recent Longwood fires have devastated farming communities in the Murrindindi Shire. We know we had to respond.

Over the past few weeks, David Bryce, our Volunteer Program Coordinator has been leading volunteers with local leaders to rebuild fences in the Murrindindi Shire. The days are long, yet fulfilling and meaningful. Our presence in these tough spaces communicate a willingness to partner, support and help carry some of the load.

Thank you to the many volunteers who have given their time and supporters who have enabled this important work to happen with your resources and materials.

Every Monday and Tuesday until 24 February 2026, we will still be repairing and rebuilding. If you would like to join us sign up below.

[Register here](#)

In Conversation with our Board Chair

Maurice Benington sits down to reflect on Habitat for Humanity Victoria's journey, values and shared commitment to ensuring everyone has a decent place to live.

[Read more](#)



Remembering Neil Shields OAM

A giant of the faith and Habitat story passed in January 2026, Rob McLaughlan OAM reflects on the former Habitat for Humanity Victoria's executive officer's legacy.

[Read more](#)



Welcome Judy!

ReStore Kilsyth welcomes Judy this month as the Store Lead.

Judy brings a wealth of op shop experience as well as leading teams and building communities.

She looks forward to getting to know our incredible volunteers, meeting customers and seeing the impact made through our ReStores.

Drop into Kilsyth to find some preloved furniture, hardware and treasures and say hello to Judy!

Well done ReStore Rosebud!

ReStore Rosebud has been hosting students from Peninsula Special School on weekly retail work experience placements. The wonderful volunteer team have welcomed students living with disability to grow confidence and find belonging whilst contributing to a meaningful cause. Well done to KerryAnne for facilitating this transformational space.



Your support makes stories like those in this newsletter possible. [Donate today](#) to help more Victorian families access decent, safe, affordable housing. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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